

“We Europeans”: *Signal* Magazine and Political Collaboration in German-occupied Europe,
1940-1945

Undergraduate Research Thesis

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To my grandfather, Joseph Henry

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Introduction

Within the vast body of scholarship on the Second World War, some of the most groundbreaking research in recent years has explored the complex relationships between Germans and the peoples they conquered. While European historians have traditionally focused on national resistance movements during the war, the topic of collaboration with the Nazi regime has remained controversial. This thesis tackles this contentious subject by examining the relationship between the French and German press industries, using the history of a German propaganda publication, *Signal* magazine, as a case study.

Signal magazine first came to my attention in late 2015 as I leafed through a collection of vintage publications from the Second World War. One publication in particular caught my attention: a thick magazine full of glossy pages and bright, Kodachrome photographs. Despite its printing during wartime, the magazine was of outstanding quality. I read through its articles on women's fashion and the latest developments in aircraft design. I followed its updates on the progress of the war. I admired its photographs of warfare and civilian life, wondering how the magazine had managed to obtain such high-quality photographs from occupied-Paris and the Eastern Front. An article casting the German war effort in a positive light, however, brought the sudden realization that I was reading German propaganda and that those Kodachrome photographs that I had admired were, in fact, Agfacolor.

Signal magazine was unlike any German propaganda I had seen before. It was subtle in its messaging, nuanced, and lacked the kind of hysterical and impassioned rants against Bolsheviks and Jews typical of other Nazi publications. It was stylized in the form of popular American magazines like *Life* and *Time*. And, of course, it was written in English – not the awkwardly-

constructed English of a second-rate translator, but the kind of English one might expect from an American or British author, full of eloquence and flair. The magazine was targeted at an audience outside the borders of the German Reich, deviating greatly from the domestic Nazi propaganda that historians have grown accustomed to seeing. Intrigued by my discovery, I searched online for more information on the magazine.

Signal was a photojournalism magazine published by the German Wehrmacht between April 1940 and April 1945. Composed in Berlin and printed by local publishing houses throughout Europe, the magazine relied on collaborative networks between Germans and other Europeans. While many historians have recognized *Signal* for its rare, wartime color photographs, few have ever studied the history or written content of the magazine. As I quickly discovered during my preliminary research, the scholarship on *Signal*'s history is surprisingly sparse: only a handful of articles (most in French and German) have ever been written. English scholarship in particular is virtually non-existent.

During the spring semester of 2016, I researched the magazine in an honors research seminar with Professor Alice Conklin from the Department of History. Using a near-complete run of the French edition of *Signal* housed at Ohio State's Rare Books and Manuscripts Library,¹ as well as issues from the English edition digitized online by the University of Chicago, I studied the political content of the magazine. In particular, I focused on how *Signal*'s message, aimed at a wider European audience, differed from that of domestic German propaganda, which was published within Germany for a specifically German audience. The central theme during the magazine's five-year run was the New Order being constructed by Nazi Germany, a project which,

¹ "World War II Periodicals Collection of Hugh A. Harter, ca. 1939-1945." This collection contains French periodicals collected by Dr. Hugh Harter during his military service in France in 1944. Dr. Harter received his PhD from Ohio State in 1959 and later served as Professor of Romance Languages at Ohio Wesleyan University. Before his passing in 2011, Dr. Harter generously donated his collection to Ohio State's Rare Books and Manuscripts Library.

Signal argued, would reverse the decline of European civilization. My research found significant contradictions between the magazine's argument for a German-led "European Community" and arguments in domestic propaganda for a German-dominated Europe.^{2, 3}

These findings raised important questions concerning the material conditions of the magazine's creation and led me to expand my term paper into a year-long thesis project with Professor Conklin as my advisor. Considering the unique political message espoused by *Signal*, I was especially interested in researching the motivations and ideological underpinnings of *Signal*'s editors, contributors, and publishers – some of whom were not German, but instead citizens of occupied countries such as France, Belgium, and Norway. Of immediate concern, however, were the Germans themselves, and more specifically, the editors who shaped the magazine's message of community and cooperation between Europeans.

In the autumn of 2016, I began research on two of the leading personalities at *Signal*: Max Clauss, a scholar who joined the editorial staff in 1940, and Giseler Wirsing, a respected German journalist who became chief editor in 1943. My primary goal was to determine the political views of these two personalities, what sympathies they held with Nazi ideology more broadly, and what effect these views had on the content of the magazine. This part of my research relied upon secondary material on the German press during the Weimar and Nazi eras, as well as English-translations of various primary sources, such as personal correspondence and several books published by Clauss and Wirsing, both before and after the Nazi seizure of power.

In October of 2016, funding from Danone North America allowed me to travel to the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), located in College Park, Maryland. There, I uncovered dozens of U.S. intelligence reports on Giseler Wirsing as well as interrogation

² The bulk of my preliminary research for Professor Conklin's seminar makes up the second chapter of this thesis.

³ All translations from French to English in this paper are my own.

records from 1945 and 1946, conducted immediately following the Allied-occupation of Germany. These records provided crucial insights into Wirsing's writing career, his political views, and his post-war reflections on the Nazi era. Also of interest at NARA were external audits of *Signal*'s publisher in Berlin, OSS intelligence reports on the European public's reception of *Signal*, and internal documents from the U.S. Office of War Information (OWI) formulating ways in which U.S. propaganda could respond to *Signal*'s anti-American rhetoric.

In the spring of 2017, I shifted my focus away from the Germans in Berlin to the Frenchmen working for the magazine in Paris. My research on these French "collaborators" faced a number of challenges, the most significant being the lack of English scholarship on *Signal* magazine and on collaborationist press more broadly. As such, I had to lay extensive groundwork and rely heavily on French primary documents. Through this research, my goal was to answer several pressing questions: Why did so many figures in the French press choose to collaborate with their nation's conquerors? Where on the political spectrum – between "committed ideologue" and "opportunist" – did these men fall? How did the publishing process for *Signal* work, and, more importantly, how were French collaborators incorporated into that process? Finally, was "collaboration" too broad a term for the French who worked for *Signal*?

I was fortunate enough to receive two undergraduate and international research grants from the College of Arts and Sciences at Ohio State, which allowed me to continue my research for two weeks in Paris in January of 2017. There, at the Archives nationales, I located and analyzed original documents related to *Signal*. Of particular interest at the archives were legal records. Following the Allied liberation of France in 1944, the French provisional government conducted épuration (purge) trials, which sought to rid French society of the collaborators who had betrayed their

nation. Among those put on trial was André Zucca, a photographer who worked as the Paris correspondent for *Signal* from 1941 to 1944. The Archives contained records of his investigation and trial, as well as original documents related to his employment with the Germans.

It was through my research on Zucca and inquiries into German-occupation records that I was able to uncover the French publishing house in charge of printing *Signal* – Imprimerie Georges Lang. This ultimately led me to back to the épuration collection at the archives, which contained a massive dossier on the publishing house's Jewish owner, Georges Lang, as well as his business' board of directors, all of whom were accused of collaboration with the Germans after the liberation. Transcripts from their May 1946 trial put the psychology of Lang, his associates, and their accusers on full display, offering fascinating insights into where the French drew the line between right and wrong during one of the darkest periods in their country's history.

Secondary sources were still important in my research on the French. A number of works have been published in French on the press industry in Paris during the war years, which was critical in reconstructing the world in which *Signal* operated. Using these writings in conjunction with archival material, I was able to piece together *Signal's* history in Paris.

Beyond analyzing the French archival documents, one of the most frustrating aspects of this ambitious project has been organizing and synthesizing the research: How does the historian construct a coherent narrative when so much of the information collected seems tangential and, at times, contradictory? Fortunately, discussions with Professor Conklin and Professor David Steigerwald from the Department of History have greatly benefitted my understanding of the research.

After much consideration, it seemed only natural to organize my research in the same manner as I had originally conducted it. The first half of this thesis examines the creation of *Signal*

and its underlying political message. The second half focuses on the Germans and French who contributed to the magazine, examining how they contributed to *Signal*'s message and how professional "collaboration" manifested itself in Germany and France.

In chapter one, I trace the transformation of Nazi propaganda from peacetime to wartime and explain how the creation of *Signal* magazine grew out of efforts to socialize and co-opt Europe's occupied-peoples into the New Order. Throughout the chapter, I discuss the material conditions of the magazine's publication, distribution, and its reception in Europe and abroad.

In chapter two, I examine the political content of *Signal* and its transformation from 1940 to 1945. While the magazine attempted to remain apolitical in its early years, it increasingly played on deeply-held European fears of societal decline. To this aim, *Signal* portrayed Germany as a benevolent hegemon working to rescue Europe. The magazine sought to present the New Order not as an aggressive effort at German conquest, but as a German-led, pan-European project.

In chapter three, I focus on Max Clauss and Giseler Wirsing, two German editors whose political views shaped much of the magazine's content. Both men were ideological conservatives who, throughout their careers, envisioned Germany as the leader of a future pan-European movement. This fact, of course, raises important questions surrounding German "collaboration," if one can call it that: as with nearly all German conservatives following Hitler's rise, both men made concessions to the Nazi regime. Clauss and Wirsing strived to reconcile their political disagreements with Nazism, a reconciliation that proved surprisingly easy for them even as they held on to the delusion of European unification. Tracing their careers – from conservative idealists to Nazi apologists – I conclude that, despite their serious misgivings about Nazism's more violent impulses, both men legitimized Hitler's regime through their work for *Signal*.

In chapter four, I examine the careers of André Zucca and Georges Lang, two Frenchmen who collaborated in the production of *Signal* between 1940 and 1944. Both men, dedicated and successful professionals before the war, found themselves suddenly confronted with the German-occupation of their country and the prospect of lost livelihoods. Rather than accepting personal ruin, however, Zucca and Lang agreed to conditions set by the Germans in working for *Signal* magazine. This chapter will focus especially on the unique circumstances faced by the French who, more than any other occupied country, had the privilege of choosing between collaboration, accommodation, and resistance.

The personal stories of the Germans and Frenchmen who collaborated on *Signal* magazine are weaved together by a common thread: a seeming ambivalence toward the Nazi regime. Whatever their personal reservations, however, all four men agreed to work with the Nazis in some capacity. In each case, personal reservations on Nazism were overcome by a desire to continue professional and political endeavors uninhibited. In the case of the Germans more specifically, collaboration meant the acceptance of Nazism and all its crimes.

This thesis project not only adds much-needed scholarship on an oft-overlooked example of war propaganda, but on broader historical questions as well. Considering the nature of *Signal*'s political message and its publication, printed in publishing houses all over Europe, my research helps answer the “why?” and “how?” questions surrounding professional “collaboration” during the Second World War. More importantly, it sheds light on how specific groups of Europeans viewed their place within the Nazi New Order, and raises intriguing questions concerning the relationship between wartime conceptions of “Europe” and postwar European integration.

Chapter 1: “A Magazine for the New Order”

“Today the crafty men who cast the Axis line from Singapore to Valparaiso are far ahead of the U.S. They have talent, experience, almost unlimited funds and no compunctions about honesty. In 18 languages, they spread their lies, fomenting hatred against the United Nations, scoffing at our war aims and our leaders. The deadliest weapon in the vast Axis propaganda arsenal is *Signal*.”⁴

– *Life* magazine editorial
March 22, 1943

One of the most important lessons the Nazis took from Germany’s defeat in the First World War was the dismal state of German propaganda in 1914-18. While Allied propaganda had denounced German atrocities in Belgium and mobilized public support for the war effort against the German “Huns,” no comparable media campaign was ever launched by the Kaiser’s propagandists.⁵ “Never again” was Hitler’s sentiment. Military struggle, he fervently believed, could not be won without a simultaneous ideological struggle over hearts and minds. It is fitting to note here, then, the stark contrasts between the First and Second World Wars: while the First had begun with an actual crime – the assassination of Franz Ferdinand – the *casus belli* for the Second was a fictional, propaganda event – the staging of a Polish attack on the German radio-transmitter at Gleiwitz, which heralded the German invasion of Poland in 1939.⁶ The Nazis were clearly masters of propaganda, making it into an art form. It is partly for this reason that the once neutral term “propaganda” has since become tinged as a derogatory word synonymous with misinformation and deceit.

⁴ “U.S. is Losing the War of Words.” *Life*, March 22, 1943, p.14-15.

⁵ Susan Bachrach et al., *State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda*, p.101.

⁶ Margaret Wagner et al., *The Library of Congress World War II Companion*, p.783.

In its most rudimentary definition, propaganda simply means the dissemination of information, usually with the purpose of persuading a group of people “about the virtues of some organization, cause, or person.” Its effectiveness is judged on its ability to encapsulate and channel strong public sentiments.⁷ The basic logic of propaganda is straightforward: only by empowering supporters, neutralizing antagonists, and winning over the hearts and minds of the indifferent can a political group elicit the public responses and actions it desires.⁸

The National Socialist Revolution that followed Hitler’s appointment as Chancellor of Germany in 1933 was indeed a revolution; all aspects of German society – culture, literature, art, religion, science – were radically altered in the image of the Nazi worldview. Of course, violent change from above is always accompanied by forms of public resistance from below. Even before their ascent to power, therefore, Nazi propagandists under the leadership of Joseph Goebbels worked to preempt such resistance. The power of Nazi propaganda lay in its ability to capture the public’s disillusionment with the Weimar Republic (and liberal democracy more broadly). Within a matter of years, the Nazis had won over millions of supporters with their appeals to public hopes – the promise of a utopian *volksgemeinschaft*, or *people’s community*, led by the Führer – as well as public fears – the “international Jewish conspiracy” that threatened the *volksgemeinschaft*.⁹

By the start of the war in 1939, all the instruments of the Nazi propaganda machine were largely in place, including “propaganda organizations, censorship mechanisms, news distribution systems, and [state] control of media and the arts.”¹⁰ There were two main bodies in particular that oversaw propaganda and censorship in the Third Reich: the Ministry of People’s Enlightenment and Propaganda (RMVP) and the Reich Chamber of Culture (RKK). At the head of the

⁷ Robert Jackall, “Introduction,” *Propaganda*, p.2.

⁸ Harold Lasswell, “Propaganda,” *Propaganda*, p.18.

⁹ Susan Bachrach et al., *State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda*, p.1, 75.

¹⁰ Margaret Wagner et al., *The Library of Congress World War II Companion*, p.784.

propaganda apparatus was Joseph Goebbels, an early member of the National Socialist Party and close confidant of Hitler. As head Minister of the RMVP, he controlled and supervised virtually all media in Germany, from radio and film to art and literature.¹¹ Whereas the goal of Goebbels' propaganda apparatus before 1939 had been to build the *volksgemeinschaft* and consolidate Nazi rule in Germany, the goal after was to prepare the German people for a racial war for survival. During the Second World War, therefore, the major theme of propaganda shifted from *community* to *struggle*, which emphasized "the importance of patriotism, the necessity of sacrifice, and the imperative to become a soldier."¹²

With rapid military victories and conquests, however, came a new problem for the Nazi regime: Germany now found millions of non-German Europeans under its control. Of course, these enemy populations could be subdued through a combination of brute force and terror (which was the primary form of German power encountered by occupied populations during the war, particularly in the East), but propagandists and ideologues, both within the Nazi party and without, understood the importance of minimizing resistance through psychological manipulation as well. With the help of propaganda, they hoped, occupied populations could not only be beaten into submission, but converted into useful tools for the German war effort (thereby diminishing the need for coercion). As John Ikenberry, an international theorist at Princeton University, explains, small states are most susceptible to outside political influence in the aftermath of war. When a new hegemon arises (in this case, Nazi Germany), its ultimate goal is to redefine the international order. The new hegemon must articulate new international norms and instill those norms in other states, a process he terms "socialization." This socialization legitimates the status of the new hegemon

¹¹ Margaret Wagner et al., The Library of Congress World War II Companion, p.787-789.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.787.

and redefines the status-quo.¹³ The term socialization implies control over mass society, in areas such as education and family life, but, in the case of Nazi Germany, socialization was limited specifically to the control of political elites.¹⁴ It should be noted, therefore, that the Nazi regime never fully controlled – nor wanted to control – the daily lives and social practices of the peoples it occupied, especially in Western Europe; the Nazis’ major concern in the West was earning the allegiance of the state, which meant earning the allegiance of local political elites. In the case of France, for example, the Nazi cause was met largely with apathy among the popular masses rather than enthusiasm, yet Germany managed to squeeze a vast amount of foodstuffs, raw materials, and human labor out of France – all thanks to the collaboration of France’s political elites: traditionalists, fascists, and technocrats.¹⁵

As Ikenberry points out, however, a hegemon’s control over elites might guarantee its control over the state, but it cannot guarantee *secure* control; the passively accommodating masses can quickly become the actively resisting masses. In the case of British colonial rule in India, it was important that British values flowed down not just to the local elites, but to the popular masses as well. In areas where this failed to occur, the stability of British rule was quite precarious.¹⁶ This lesson was not lost on German propagandists in the early years of the Second World War. Even in the hubris of German victory in 1940 and the establishment of local governments cooperative with Germany, many Nazi ideologues saw the necessity for the Nazi propaganda apparatus to extend outside Germany’s borders into the occupied countries.

¹³ John Ikenberry, “Socialization and Hegemonic Power,” *International Organization*, p.283.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.293.

¹⁵ Robert Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard, New Order*, p.234-241.

¹⁶ John Ikenberry, “Socialization and Hegemonic Power,” *International Organization*, p.314.

In the autumn of 1939, the Division for Defense Propaganda (a division of the Wehrmacht) hired the services of Heinrich Hunke, an economist, and Major Fritz Solm, a marketing specialist, to develop a propaganda publication targeted at the occupied peoples. Solm had received his education at Columbia University and spent the 1920s working for a New York advertising agency.¹⁷ It was Solm's suggestion to produce a European version of the American *Life* magazine, an idea that quickly caught on with the Wehrmacht; photojournalism magazines had grown significantly in popularity throughout the 1920s and 1930s, both in the United States and in Western Europe, presenting a kind of "documentary theater" not seen in other forms of print media.¹⁸ Taking advice from the prominent journalist and foreign policy expert Giseler Wirsing, the team centralized the magazine's message around the "New Order." Following *Signal*'s inception, the Wehrmacht hired an elite group of prominent journalists, war reporters, foreign policy experts, and photographers to contribute articles for *Signal*.

Despite being written and edited by Wehrmacht staff, the printing of *Signal* was contracted through a private publisher in Berlin, Deutscher Verlag. Founded in 1877 by a Jewish businessman, Deutscher Verlag's name before the Nazi era had been Ullstein Verlag. In the 1920s, Ullstein Verlag had grown from a humble family business into a press empire, publishing a number of successful papers such as *Tempo* and *BZ am Mittag*. Despite being a Jewish-owned business, Ullstein Verlag was exempt from the Nazi boycotts of 1933, largely because the Nazis feared that hurting such a large company could put hundreds of Aryan employees out of work. In 1934, the head of the Reich Press Chamber "bought out" the Ullstein empire, and in 1937, renamed it Deutscher Verlag.¹⁹ Deutscher Verlag remained one of the major publishing houses in Germany

¹⁷ Pamela Swett, "Preparing for Victory: Heinrich Hunke, the Nazi Werberat, and West German Prosperity." *Central European History*, p.700-702.

¹⁸ Claude Bellanger, *Histoire générale de la presse française, tome 4: De 1940 à 1958*, p.59.

¹⁹ Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, p.120; 436.

throughout the Nazi era and continued to grow, employing over 8,000 workers in management, printing, and distribution by 1940.²⁰ That same year, the Wehrmacht signed a contract with the company to print and distribute *Signal*, a contract the company eagerly accepted due to the magazine's heavy subsidization by the state. In addition, the contract also assigned the foreign department at Deutscher Verlag the task of translating *Signal* from its original German into other European languages, a task that required a team of over a hundred translators.²¹

In April 1940, the first issue of *Signal* hit newsstands across Europe, both in occupied and neutral countries. Although, initially, the magazine's distribution had been handled exclusively by Deutscher Verlag,²² Germany's successive military victories expanded the production needs for *Signal* beyond its publisher's capabilities: at its height in 1943, *Signal* magazine was published in over twenty languages and had a circulation of over two and a half million copies, making it the most widely circulated publication in Europe during the Second World War.²³ In 1941, Deutscher Verlag was forced to decentralize its operations, contracting out much of its work to publishing houses in Oslo, Paris, and Milan.²⁴ Both the English and French editions of *Signal* (which this thesis examines) were printed in Paris.

As a propaganda tool, *Signal* appealed to its readers with a colorful, sleek and modern design, styled after the American-published *Life* magazine, as well as an affordable cost at ten cents, the same as *Life*.²⁵ *Signal* is best remembered today by historians for its abundance of glossy,

²⁰ Deutscher Verlag, 1944-1947. Office of Military Government for Germany: Records of the Information Control Division, Box 175. Records of United States Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Record Group 498. NARA, College Park, MD.

²¹ Aurianne Cox, "Le journal *Signal* : Presse illustrée et propagande allemande en France." Culture et médias sous l'Occupation : Des entreprises dans la France de Vichy, p.194.

²² Margaret Wagner et al., The Library of Congress World War II Companion, p.802-803.

²³ Michael Balfour, Propaganda in War, 1939-1945, p.105.; for comparison, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, an official organ of the Nazi party, never reached a total circulation higher than 1.8 million copies.

²⁴ Aurianne Cox, "Le journal *Signal* : Presse illustrée et propagande allemande en France." Culture et médias sous l'Occupation : Des entreprises dans la France de Vichy, p.193.

²⁵ 0.10 USD in 1940 would be equivalent to 1.73 USD in 2017.

full-page color photographs (a rarity in the early 1940s). The ultimate goal of the magazine's editorials and photo-essays was twofold: to convince the occupied peoples of Germany's goodwill and to persuade them to support the German cause.

Considering the subjective nature of such a task, it is, of course, impossible to measure the precise effectiveness of *Signal* as a propaganda tool. It is possible, however, to gain a sense of the magazine's reception among European publics. The journalist Claude Bellanger recognized *Signal* for having "perhaps the best technical presentation" of any publication in occupied France, "although it appeared too clearly as a magazine of the Wehrmacht." For this reason, *Signal* was met with significant hostility in the south of France, where resistance members staged attacks on kiosk owners selling the magazine in Lyon and Nice. Frightened by the attacks, many French newspaper merchants simply refused to carry the magazine, an act of defiance that prompted a blustery response from the German embassy in Vichy: all French kiosk owners were ordered to "display *Signal* in a very visible way" under the threat of having their licenses revoked.²⁶ The magazine did, however, enjoy more success in the north of France. As one German businessman observed, many Parisians had distaste for German newspapers, but still bought *Signal*. This was attributed to the "curiosity of the passerby" – Parisians were enticed by *Signal*'s broad content, its high production value, and their own simple eagerness to read.²⁷ An OSS intelligence report from September 1942 noted that, while most Europeans distrusted the Germans, they still relied heavily on German news to keep up with the progress of the war.²⁸ *Signal* succeeded not so much in

²⁶ Claude Bellanger, *Histoire générale de la presse française*, tome 4: De 1940 à 1958, p.12.

²⁷ Archives nationales de France, 72AJ/1885/archives d'Alfons Geubels.

²⁸ Anglo-American Propaganda Progress in France, 23 September 1942. Military Intelligence Division Regional File, 1922-1944, France, Box 805. Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165. NARA, College Park, MD.

winning over Europeans to the German cause as it did in fueling European doubt and distrust of the Allies.²⁹

Signal's message was not aimed solely at occupied peoples, however. The magazine proved itself a nuisance even in countries outside of Hitler's New Order – a testament to its wide distribution. As early as November 1940, the magazine was causing a stir in neutral Turkey, where anti-German sentiment was on the rise due to Germany's alliance with Bulgaria. A *New York Times* article describes various efforts to halt *Signal*'s distribution in Turkey, including violent student protests and threats from the Turkish Association of Newspaper Proprietors to revoke the licenses of kiosk owners selling the magazine.³⁰ On the opposite side of Europe, English editions of *Signal* were being sent from France through neutral Ireland and into the United States for sale. As late as 1943, content from the magazine was still being reproduced in American newspapers, including the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*.³¹ In a March 1943 article from *Life* magazine, U.S. members of Congress lamented the poor state of America's propaganda in comparison to Germany's, singling out *Signal* magazine as the greatest propaganda publication in Europe. "The deadliest weapon in the vast Axis propaganda arsenal," the article's author wrote, "is *Signal*." The author's criticism of American efforts was scathing, disparaging American propaganda as merely a "pallid imitation" of *Signal* and claiming that the American magazine *Victory* had only half the distribution.³² Certainly, the magazine caused a stir wherever German agents managed to distribute it, drawing the ire of political leaders in countries as far away as Turkey and the United States.

²⁹ Long-Range Plan for Belgium (11 November 1944), Projection of America. Policy Directives, Records of the New York Office Bureau of Overseas Publications, Box 808. Office of War Information, Record Group 208. NARA, College Park, MD.

³⁰ G. D. R. Gedy, "Reich Envoy Seeks Turkish President," *New York Times*, November 30, 1940.

³¹ Walton W. Rankin, "Victory in Tunis Vindicates Belief that Spirit of Free Man is Unconquerable." *Plain Dealer*, May 16, 1943.

³² "U.S. is Losing the War of Words." *Life*, March 22, 1943, p.11, 15. ; *Victory* magazine was produced by the U.S. Office of War Information (OWI) during the war. Like *Signal*, *Victory* was published in multiple languages and was distributed in foreign nations (including in Europe) to persuade others of the virtues of the American war effort.

Despite its relative independence from the authority of the RMVP, the magazine's provocative content drew on many of the same principles adhered to by Joseph Goebbels. Goebbels believed that propaganda, especially when directed at potentially hostile populations, should not be overly forceful in its opinions. Instead, the most effective propaganda should provide a mix of leisurely entertainment as well as suggestive messaging.³³ This principle is reflected in *Signal*, which, until the latter half of the war, contained few overtly political editorials, instead focusing on grandiose depictions of battle and light-hearted, seemingly innocuous articles on art, literature, and film. In Germany, Goebbels also strove to use the "truth" as frequently as possible, to boost the credibility of German propaganda. "Lies," Goebbels explained, were only useful "when they could not be disproved."³⁴ Again, the editors of *Signal* largely adhered to this principle, choosing simply to omit facts about German defeat rather than publishing lies about German victory. Extending Goebbels' truth principle, for example, *Signal* reproduced material from enemy publications (*The New York Times*, *Reader's Digest*, and *Collier's* magazine) to lend credibility to its articles on the horrors of life inside the United States.³⁵

As David Welch, a noted scholar of propaganda, once wrote, examining propaganda "sheds important light on the Nazi mentality."³⁶ In the case of *Signal*, it reveals the ways in which the Nazis tried to alter the mentalities of other Europeans; to understand how the magazine made its case to the occupied peoples, this paper now turns to the contents and transformation of the magazine, from April 1940 to its end in 1945.

³³ Leonard Doob, "Goebbels' Principles of Propaganda" *Propaganda*, p.198-199.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.200.

³⁵ See page 31.

³⁶ David Dennis, *Inhumanities: Nazi Interpretations of Western Culture*, p.9.

Chapter 2: The Myth of the European Community

“We Europeans sense a deeper meaning in this war, our war of unification. We can already see our fractured Continent advancing toward a social future as a community.”³⁷

– Dr. Giselher Wirsing, April 1943
chief editor for *Signal* magazine

Over the course of its five-year run, the central challenge for *Signal* was convincing Europeans that they had not truly been conquered, but instead rescued by Nazi Germany from decline and irrelevance. In exploiting the strong sense of national decay among Europe’s occupied peoples, the authors emphasized the need for Germany to rise up as Europe’s new hegemon. As this chapter will attempt to demonstrate, *Signal* supported this message by appealing both to hope – Germany the benevolent leader and model society – as well as to fear – Americans and Soviets, the usurpers of Europe’s mantle.

In May 1941, a headline in *Signal* blasted out, “Two Balkan countries have given their decision!” Spring 1941 had witnessed the spectacular German campaign through the Balkans, as the Wehrmacht easily defeated both Yugoslavia and Greece and banished the British from the European continent. In the article, photographs depict Bulgarian and Yugoslav citizens celebrating the arrival of German troops in the Balkans. One striking scene captures Bulgarian women dancing in their traditional national dress while jubilant German soldiers look on. As the reader turns the page, however, this happy scene is shattered by photographs of the horrific bombing and destruction of Belgrade. Despite Yugoslavia’s original assurances to Hitler, the government had

³⁷ Giselher Wirsing, “Les insulaires: Histoire d’une révolution manquée,” *Signal* (Français) 1943 no.8, p.11.

been overthrown by usurpers who rejected German overtures. According to the magazine, the new government in Belgrade was betraying the will of the Yugoslav people and accepting British influence in Europe. Clearly, such resistance to Germany could not be tolerated, and *Signal* proudly displayed the destruction rained down on the Yugoslav capital by Stuka dive bombers. The magazine still took time to save face for the Wehrmacht, assuring its readers that the Luftwaffe had only targeted “les objectifs militaires.”³⁸

The first two years of *Signal*’s existence was, in many ways, a fitting reflection of the war’s progression, as German forces fought from victory to victory. The magazine’s central message during the early years of 1940 and 1941 was two-fold (and seemingly contradictory). On the one hand, the message was threatening: German victory was certain, and any resistance to the German master was an exercise in futility – as the fate of Belgrade had proven. On the other hand, the message was reassuring: German soldiers were friendly and humane, sparing Europeans the terror and destruction waged by the Allies. The compromise between these two conflicting images could be found in articles such as the one aforementioned on Yugoslavia. Issues of the magazine from 1940 are full of images of bombed-out cities like Rotterdam and Warsaw. As in the case of Belgrade, the terror bombing of Rotterdam is depicted as a regrettable but necessary act to cut down “all resistance.”³⁹ While there is much to be said regarding the falsehood of such claims made by *Signal*, the day-to-day narrative of the war presented in the magazine is, for the most part, accurate and “honest.” The rapid conquests of 1940 and 1941 gave German propagandists little reason to falsify the general progression of the war, especially in the West. Articles on the German invasion of Norway, for example, depict the conflict as a preventative measure against the British seizure

³⁸ “Deux pays balkaniques ont pris leur décision,” *Signal* (Français) 1941 no.10, p.3-4.

³⁹ “The Spectacle of Total War,” *Signal* (English) 1941 no.2, n.pag.

of Norwegian ports and resources – a point that was largely true, and supported Germany’s claims of protecting Europe.⁴⁰

As Germany encountered its first serious setbacks in late 1941, *Signal* was quick to downplay such problems and diverted responsibility away from the failures the Wehrmacht. Images from 1941, for example, depict German panzers bogged down in the rain and mud of the Russian *rasputitsa*, blaming the slowing of the German advance on spontaneous, unpredictable weather rather than Germany’s own poor logistical planning.⁴¹ As the war turned decisively against the Germans in 1943, however, simplistic explanations would not suffice. *Signal* could not ignore the momentous German defeat at Stalingrad, and the magazine’s editors worked around this problem by spinning the defeat as a tactical sacrifice on the part of the German Sixth Army; the defeat, they claimed, was an intentional action to buy time for Germany’s frontline troops behind the Stalingrad pocket.⁴² In most cases, however, *Signal* chose simply to ignore defeat. The German retreat in North Africa received scant coverage, and the presence of German troops in Tunisia in 1943 was depicted only briefly, without any explanation of the long retreat from Egypt that had preceded it.⁴³ Over time, the magazine’s emphasis on the war effort decreased as a greater number of articles focused on the goal of European unity and collaboration with Germany. Even though it maintained an optimistic picture of German-occupied Europe throughout the war, the shift in content – from stories of German victory to warnings of imminent European decline – created a sense of desperation in the magazine’s overall message; as the Nazis grew evermore aware their own vulnerability, *Signal* could no longer rely on simply cowing Europeans into submission with images of German victory and retribution. It would increasingly attempt to rally Europeans to the war effort,

⁴⁰ “Oslo, 9th April,” *Signal* (English) 1940 no.2, n.pag.

⁴¹ “Routes soviétiques...” *Signal* (Français) 1941 no.17, n.pag.

⁴² Wilhelm Ehmer, “Europe’s Shield,” *Signal* (English) 1943 no.6, p.2-6.

⁴³ “Renfort pour la Tunisie” *Signal* (Français) 1943 no.7, n.pag.

focusing on the hopes of European unity under German hegemony and, more importantly, on the enemies now threatening Europe – reminiscent of pre-war propaganda on the *volksgemeinschaft* and the “international conspiracy” against it.

Volksgemeinschaft, as explained earlier in this thesis, was an important theme in Nazi propaganda before the war. In building a community of the people, the Nazis strove to throw off the old aristocratic order that had governed before 1918 and attempted to remold the German people under National Socialist ideology, preparing the newly “Nazified masses” for war.⁴⁴ Populist and egalitarian rhetoric, therefore, was a useful tool in taming the proletariat, giving Germans from every walk of life a sense of unity within a single, racialized “people’s community.”⁴⁵ The effectiveness of such propaganda was not lost on the editors of *Signal*. Drawing on the general perception of European decline and prewar calls for European integration, the magazine’s editors expanded upon the idea of “people’s community” to suggest the building of a “European Community.”⁴⁶ Many of *Signal*’s political articles were tied together by the common thread of European decline and the need for a new hegemon at the heart of Europe to unite the continent – Germany.⁴⁷

In 1940 already, *Signal* was drawing comparisons between Hitler and Napoleon, as both men had united the continent through conquest. Hitler was inherently different, though, in that he was not fighting simply for his nation (Germany), but for the sovereignty of all nations.⁴⁸ He was, in a sense, uniting the entire European continent into a single community. For centuries, the magazine laments, Europe had ripped itself apart in “fratricidal civil wars” and greatly weakened its global standing. With the new German hegemon, however, “[civil] war” had been banished from

⁴⁴ Richard Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, p.416.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.468.

⁴⁶ F. W. von Oertzen, “Société des Nations? Communauté des Nations!” *Signal* (Français) 1941 no.13, p.8-11.

⁴⁷ Rudolf Fischer, “Qui peut diriger l’Europe?” *Signal* (Français) 1941 no.11, p.22, 27.

⁴⁸ The term “sovereignty” is explicitly used here, although *Signal* is evasive on the meaning of the term.

the continent, allowing the nations of Europe to cooperate with one another once more, as they had under the Roman Empire. Only through German hegemony could Europe gain economic autarky, freeing itself from the threat of British blockade and outside ideological influence.⁴⁹ Germany was a prosperous and powerful nation located at the heart of the continent and, therefore, in the most ideal position to bring the continent together.⁵⁰

With Germany constructed as the hero of the new “European Community,” *Signal* also needed to present an enemy that threatened the community: the British Empire. The English people, according to the magazine, were a noble and superior people who, nonetheless, were controlled by greedy, aristocratic elites. The magazine offers scathing critiques of the island’s stratified society, which separated the “gloomy working class” from the “gay gentleman class”; historically, the gentleman class had reserved all political power for itself and exploited the English nation for profit.⁵¹ The start of the Second World War, however, threatened this elite. As the German blitzkrieg spread the National Socialist Revolution across Europe, the German blitz over England too had threatened to undo the British aristocracy through “bomb socialism”: cities were reduced to rubble, and English citizens were forced to work together in the streets and sleep together in shelters, challenging traditional class structures with the promise of a truly national movement. Unfortunately, *Signal* concluded, this revolution had been thwarted by English aristocrats like Winston Churchill. Rallying the masses to continue the war against Germany, the aristocrats had conned the young men and workers of England into fighting for the continuation of the “privileged society” rather than for the “nation.”⁵²

⁴⁹ Max Clauss, “European Decision 1940,” *Signal* (English) 1940 no.15, p.4.

⁵⁰ Max Clauss, “Le mauvais chemin de la Paneurope,” *Signal* (Français), 1940 no.17, p.4-5.

⁵¹ Ernst Lewalter, “The Road to Dunkerque: On the Structure of English Society,” *Signal* (English) 1940 no.9, p.20.

⁵² Giseler Wirsing, “The Island: The story of an interrupted revolution,” *Signal* (English) 1943 no.8, p.8-11.

As the magazine claimed throughout its five-year run, if England's aristocrats did not care about the English nation, they certainly did not care about Europe. Their actions were driven purely by liberal economics and personal gain. The goal of the English, therefore, was a "balance" on the continent of Europe; the peoples of Europe were to remain divided and rearrangeable – much like a jigsaw puzzle – in order to ensure that Europe could never form a unified front against England's interests.⁵³ Its Empire could, moreover, dominate the global economy and flood the continent with "cheap nigger and coolie labor."⁵⁴ The blind greed of English aristocrats, *Signal* argued, had weakened both the English nation and the nations of Europe, making them ever more vulnerable to the onslaught of the two great evils of the modern world: American capitalism and Soviet Bolshevism. It was for this reason that the nations of Europe had to look to German leadership. Germany was fighting a revolutionary "war of unification," in which elites would be deposed and nations reborn, building up a new European Community. "That is our advantage over the people of the British Isles," the magazine's editorial proclaimed, "[the British] are remaining behind whilst we are striding forward."⁵⁵

As *Signal*'s articles made clear, the creation of the European Community meant the restoration of traditional nations within a larger empire. A German hegemon – and only a German hegemon – could revive the nations of Europe. Throughout the magazine, photo-essays portrayed Europe as a blossoming garden of diverse peoples: Russian peasants return to the soil after years of brutal Soviet collectivization,⁵⁶ youth camps flourish in the rejuvenated France under Vichy,⁵⁷ and Hungarian peasants return to their national roots by wearing peasant dress and singing folk

⁵³ Max Clauss "Le mauvais chemin de la Paneurope," *Signal* (Français), 1940 no.17, p.4-5.

⁵⁴ "The peace which could not last: Why 1939 had to follow 1919," *Signal* (English) 1941 no.7, p.4-5

⁵⁵ Giseler Wirsing, "The Island: The story of an interrupted revolution," *Signal* (English) 1943 no.8, p.11.

⁵⁶ "On their own soil again," *Signal* (English) 1943 no.12, p.27-30.

⁵⁷ "L'Appel de la France à sa jeunesse," *Signal* (Français) 1943 no.10, p.38.

songs.⁵⁸ Not only had Germany revived the “nation,” but it had also united Europe’s nations behind a common cause: European survival. In a further attempt to foster collaboration between the occupied peoples and Germany, *Signal* commonly depicted the variety of volunteers fighting alongside the German Wehrmacht as “equals” on the Eastern Front: Frenchmen, Spaniards, Belgians, Flemings, Dutch, Danes, Norwegians, Hungarians, Croats, Ukrainians, and Russians. As these photos show, committed nationalists had a duty to protect the European Community and to fight alongside their German ally.⁵⁹

Here, it is important to ask what the magazine meant by a European Community. With a broad diversity of people and languages on the European continent, what was it that defined a true European as opposed to an American or a Soviet? *Signal*’s answer was simple: Culture. Culture was a European phenomenon, and fittingly enough, *Signal* placed Germany at the heart of a supposed cultural renaissance now taking place in occupied Europe. In this way, it could avoid the sticky question of national sovereignty.

“The Great German Awakening,” Joseph Goebbels proclaimed in 1933, “[is] not purely political, but [is] a cultural one as well.”⁶⁰ *Kultur* had always been a cornerstone of National Socialist ideology, emphasizing German brilliance in the areas of painting, sculpture, music, film, and literature. The decades preceding Hitler’s ascension to power in 1933, according to the Nazis, had represented a dark age of cultural degeneracy and decline, when Germans had abandoned their cultural roots in Classicism and Romanticism for Modernism and Abstractionism. By sloughing

⁵⁸ “Part of Hungary again!” *Signal* (English) 1941 no.5, n.pag.

⁵⁹ See “For Europe...” *Signal* (English) 1942 no.4, p.14-15 ; “I want to fight for the new Europe,” *Signal* (English) 1941 no.14 p.18 ; “La Croatie, le pays qui forma les frontaliers,” *Signal* (Français) 1943 no.10, p.11-14 ; “Nouvelles couleurs, vieilles traditions,” *Signal* (Français) 1943 no.20, n.pag.

⁶⁰ David Dennis, *Inhumanities: Nazi Interpretations of Western Culture*, p.383.

off the years of degeneration, Hitler had created a new “Nazi Renaissance” in Germany, where the German “spirit” and “will” would break free of the chains of intellectualism, achieving new heights in the world of art.⁶¹ *Signal* magazine took many of its cues from propaganda within Germany. Focusing on its non-German audience, *Signal* carefully worked to construct an image of Germany as Europe’s natural leader. The result was a delicate balancing act that strained credulity. In theory, *Kultur* did not make Germany superior to other peoples, but nevertheless made it the standard-bearer of European Culture.

From 1940 to 1945, *Signal*’s photos and articles portrayed a benevolent German hegemon, returning European culture to its ancient roots in Greece and Rome. Neoclassicism permeated the pages of the magazine, especially in the aftermath of the conquest of Greece: German Luftwaffe bombers are pictured flying over the Acropolis, a swastika flag flutters between ancient columns, and the ruins of a temple loom in the background as German soldiers lounge on a beach.⁶² German soldiers themselves were romanticized as heroic figures, and *Signal* sought to mold them, quite literally, in the image of the ancient Greek warrior. Images of nude German soldiers are littered throughout the magazine’s issues: men bathe nude together in a Greek hot springs, and, in a photograph titled “Soldiers of Tomorrow,” athletically-fit German men bare all for the camera as they undergo a medical examination.⁶³ *Signal* wanted to present German soldiers as the spiritual and physical embodiment of the classical ideal, a theme found in many of the magazine’s articles. After the Soviet victory at Stalingrad, for example, the magazine artfully compared the defeat of the German Sixth Army to the Last Stand of the Spartans at Thermopylae, going as far as to refer

⁶¹ David Dennis, *Inhumanities: Nazi Interpretations of Western Culture*, p.383-401.

⁶² See “Aux Thermopyles,” *Signal* (Français) 1941 no.11, n.pag. ; “Above the Acropolis,” *Signal* (English) 1941 no.12, n.pag.

⁶³ “Soldiers of tomorrow,” *Signal* (English) 1944 no.4, n.pag.

to General Paulus as the German “King Leonidas.”⁶⁴ Of course, this was a gross misrepresentation of the battle, where, in reality, the Germans had surrendered, not “fought to the last man.”

Signal’s editors stressed the Classical and Hellenic roots of Western Culture, not only through the “virtues of war,” but through “classical beauty” as well. The efforts of German archaeologists were documented by the magazine’s editors, and, on a number of occasions, the renaissance became quite literal. In a 1940 photo-essay, the rediscovery of an ancient relief sculpture from the time of the Roman Emperor Domitian is detailed. German ingenuity, the article states, had finally revealed the “classical beauty” of the sculpture to Europeans after being lost for nearly two-thousand years.⁶⁵ According to National Socialist ideology, the beauty and power of classical art lay in its raw depiction of masculinity and femininity, unsullied by the distortions and abstractions of the interwar avant-garde.

Seeking to depict Nazi Germany as the harbinger of a continent-wide cultural renaissance, *Signal* celebrated artistic collaboration between Germans and fellow Europeans. During the summer of 1942, sculptures by the famed Nazi neo-realist sculptor Arno Breker were put on display in Paris at the Musée de l’Orangerie, and photographers for *Signal* were on-site to capture the cultural collaboration between Germans and French. In one photograph, Jean Cocteau, the famed French artist and director, admires Breker’s classical nudes. In an accompanying article, the overtly Fascist journalist and writer Robert Brasillach praises Breker’s sculptures as the embodiment of the “new European *esprit*.”⁶⁶ Because of the war, the article implied, Germany’s *Kultur* had been spread to the occupied peoples. Many articles go further, complementing the realistic

⁶⁴ Wilhelm Ehmer, “Europe’s Shield,” *Signal* (English) 1943 no.6, p.2-6.

⁶⁵ “L’Empereur Domitien part en guerre: une frise monumentale découverte à Rome,” *Signal* (Français) 1940 no.13, p.36-37. As Suzanne Marchand has shown, German scholars had pioneered the modern discipline of archaeology in the nineteenth century with their recovery of classical antiquities – a legacy the Nazis fully exploited. See her *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970*.

⁶⁶ “Un Succès: L’exposition d’Arno Breker à Paris,” *Signal* (Français) 1942 no.15, n.pag. Cocteau unlike Brasillach never embraced fascism, but like many avant-garde artists made his obeisance to the Nazis when pressed to do so.

human forms sculpted by non-Germans, such as the Croatian artist Ivan Meštrović.⁶⁷ Because it was the antithesis of degenerate modernism, the revival of classical art would restore European culture in all its national variants, thereby reversing European decline in general.

Kultur and neoclassicism were not the only tools, however, with which Germany combatted “degenerate” modernism; a “return to the roots” also meant embracing Nazi traditionalism. Playing on fears of European decline and plummeting fertility rates, *Signal* promoted not only peasant lifeways, but also traditional family structures and gender roles. Once again, Nazi Germany was presented as the only culture Europeans could look to for guidance. In Germany, the revolutionary spirit of National Socialism had restored the German family and rejuvenated German youth.⁶⁸ Hitler had removed the crushing economic burden of the Versailles *diktat*, which had caused a decline in births and a “diminution of national strength.” Because of National Socialism, the marriage rate was miraculously rising in Germany, and more German infants were being born than ever before.⁶⁹ With the German conquest of Europe, National Socialism now offered to revive European families everywhere.

Restoring European families ultimately meant returning European men and women to their traditional gender roles. Before the war, modernism and liberal democracy had given rise to a “ridiculous spectacle”: the woman who “renounces domesticity, boasts of scientific knowledge, takes up politics, [and] dabbles with pen and ink.” In abandoning her role as wife and mother, woman had taken on the role of man and defied the “natural” order, causing both the decline in fertility rates and the rise in sexual promiscuity. In order to reverse its own decline and end modern degeneracy, Europe had to recognize the most fundamental law of nature: “Man makes history;

⁶⁷ “Le miracle des montagnes dalmates,” *Signal* (Français) 1940 no.15, p.18.

⁶⁸ “Tout pour la Nation!” *Signal* (Français) 1941 no.8, p.20-21.

⁶⁹ Otto Robolsky, “The German people’s tree of life,” *Signal* (English) 1941 no.6, p.8.

woman perpetuates the generations.” According to *Signal*, traditionalism did not mean an imposed inequality, but instead a “natural equality.” Society needed both man *and* woman, as each fulfilled a role only they were capable of fulfilling; man was the natural authority figure in society, while woman was the natural “helper.” *Signal*’s scientific editor elaborated: “typical vocations for women are those in which relations between people can be strengthened and cultivated Such professions include laboratory assistant, the secretary, and the nurse.”⁷⁰ *Signal*’s emphasis on equality displayed the modern and revolutionary aspirations of Nazism, always in tension with its traditionalism.

Ultimately, by presenting National Socialism as the purveyor of traditionalism and classicism (and therefore, the crusader against modern degeneracy), *Signal*’s editors constructed Nazi Germany as the standard-bearer of Western culture and inheritor of the “European spirit.” It was clear then that German hegemony was returning Europeans to their roots, and thus, ostensibly restoring Europe’s standing in the world. For the Nazis, however, being the *inheritor* of the Greco-Roman tradition was not enough. Germany was Europe’s *new* hegemon, and therefore its new leader. Naturally, the editors of *Signal* wanted to portray Germany as leading Europe into the future – primarily through technological advancement and an alternative modernity.

One peculiar aspect of National Socialism (and fascist ideology more generally) was its scathing condemnation of the degenerative nature of modernity – including Enlightenment intellectualism, liberalism, and democracy – and simultaneous celebration of many of the fruits that modernity bore – namely, technological advancement, consumerism, and mass politics. Robert Paxton, a noted historian and expert on fascist ideology, attributes this seeming contradiction to two common sentiments of the time; many Europeans (including fascists) accepted the goals of

⁷⁰ Heinz Graupner, “Woman: Autonomous in her sphere,” *Signal* (English) 1943 no.20, n.pag.

progress and individual freedom, but rejected the methods used to achieve those goals (liberalism and democracy), instead turning toward totalitarianism.⁷¹ This phenomenon, later termed “reactionary modernism,” was prevalent not only in Germany, but in other countries in Europe as well, such as France and Italy.

Signal appealed to this sentiment by embracing modern technology in particular, portraying Nazi Germany as an enthusiastic pioneer in a number of fields. The magazine is full of articles on Germany’s many technological achievements – in warfare, transportation, medicine, agriculture, communication, fashion, and entertainment.⁷² Numerous articles praise Germany’s miracle drugs, miracle weapons, and development of railroads.⁷³ These are accompanied by advertisements for German-made radios, Mercedes cars, and sleek new designs for typewriters.⁷⁴ The “Nazi Renaissance” itself had also allowed Germans to pioneer film, a new form of art.⁷⁵ Occasionally, articles in the magazine focused on the various ways in which German ingenuity improved the lives of fellow Europeans. In a 1941 photo-essay titled “Paris on Wheels,” the citizens of Paris enjoy leisure time and pleasure, all thanks to a “German invention,” the bicycle. According to the essay, French, Dutch, and Danish peoples use the “German” bicycle widely, using it not only for pleasure, but for economic reasons as well – the bicycle saves fuel. Once again, *Signal* employs pseudo-egalitarian rhetoric to explain the virtues of German hegemony: the German bicycle has given even the “poorest of the poor” access to transportation, and therefore, greater access to a society once dominated by the bourgeoisie and aristocracy.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Robert Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard, New Order*, p.231-233.

⁷² For examples, see: “Berlin et Vienne,” *Signal* (Français) 1942 no.8, n.pag. ; “9 = 1! Un sensationnel projet ferroviaire!” *Signal* (Français) 1943 no.6, p.35-37.

⁷³ See: “25 years later,” *Signal* (English) 1943 no.8, p.23.

⁷⁴ See: “Mercedes Office Machines,” *Signal* (English) 1940 no.9, p.29.

⁷⁵ See: Wolfgang Liebeneiner, “A new form of art: The development of the German film,” *Signal* (English) 1943 no.14, p.33.

⁷⁶ “Paris on Wheels,” *Signal* (English) 1941 no.2, n.pag.

The culmination of German technology and German hegemony, a *Signal* editorial explained in 1943, would be the material unification of the European Community. Technology had advanced faster than had the governing structures of European society. Since the early nineteenth century, Europe had been governed by the old “Vienna System,” which left the continent divided into various quarreling, disparate nations. This system made sense, according to the editors, when traveling across the continent took weeks or even months. The twentieth century had come, however, and transportation technology – including trains, cars, and airplanes – was advancing much faster than Europe was advancing politically, threatening to make the once-powerful continent obsolete in the face of large, rising powers like the United States. By erasing these “archaic” political boundaries and spreading technology, a hegemonic Germany was advancing the future of Europe and making Europeans competitive on the world stage once more.⁷⁷ A map of the European continent in a 1941 issue of *Signal* displayed the continental rail-network being created by Germany, with the German capital as the hub.⁷⁸ The allusion to the Roman Empire is striking – all roads lead to Berlin.

Thus far, the message of *Signal* has been largely a message of hope. The European Community was taking shape, and Germany was at the heart of the process. There was, of course, a darker side to this message; Germany was not simply *leading* the Community, but *protecting* it from dangerous enemies. While a roadblock to unity on the continent, English elites were portrayed by the magazine as more buffoonish than sinister – depicted merely as senile old men who, in their nearsighted quest for wealth and woeful disregard for others, had unwittingly sold Europe down the river to more insidious forces. Those insidious forces were the ideologies of capitalism

⁷⁷ “How Large is Europe?” *Signal* (English) 1943 no.8, p.36-27.

⁷⁸ “Le trafic international dans l’Europe sans frontières.” *Signal* (Français) 1941 no.20.

and Bolshevism, which manifested physically in the United States and the Soviet Union.

By 1945, American and Soviet forces had – quite literally – destroyed much of the cultural landscape of Europe. In an article early that year, the editors of *Signal* observed dejectedly, “Athens is in ruins. Rome is threatened by civil war. The cathedrals of Europe have fallen to ashes.”⁷⁹ According to these writers, the Allies had waged a heartless war of “terror” in order to murder Europeans and annihilate their civilization. This theme was not new in 1945, having appeared regularly throughout the pages of *Signal* during its run, especially after the launch of the Combined Bomber Offensive over Europe in 1943, which left countless cities in ruins and hundreds of thousands dead. The Allied targeting of civilian centers aided the Germans’ claim that “viciousness” and wanton “disregard for human life” were integral to the military traditions of the Allied nations. In one example, a 1944 historical article by military correspondent Walter Kiaulehn explained that, beginning with the American Civil War and General Sherman’s March to the Sea, American military tactics had been targeted not at “enemy armies,” but at “enemy peoples.” Implicit was the notion that an American invasion would mean a brutal campaign across Europe, where neither woman nor child would be spared.⁸⁰ Ultimately, the destructiveness of the Allied campaign against Germany, both in material and human costs, was not the result of serious strategic considerations, but of the underlying ideology of each nation. The United States and the Soviet Union, the magazine argued, threatened to undermine national cultures and entire civilizations, and therefore threatened the very essence of what it meant to be European.

⁷⁹ “What are your tasks after the war?” *Signal* (English) 1945 no.5, p.26.

⁸⁰ Walter Kiaulehn, “America’s Contribution to the Conduct of the War: the Anaconda System,” *Signal* (English) 1944 no.1, n.pag.

Time and time again, *Signal* held up the United States as a textbook example of what happened when modernity triumphed over tradition. If modernity meant abandoning one's roots, then the United States was a rootless society. The American people had lost all sense of direction and succumbed to degeneration – unemployment robbed the common man of dignity and self-worth, racial groups mixed openly and clashed, American youth became truant and delinquent, and women abandoned all decency and sexual morality.⁸¹ Over the course of 1943, *Signal* published a series of articles titled “Americana” documenting the horrors of daily life in the United States. Reproducing material from the *New York Times*, *Life* magazine, *Collier's* magazine, and *Reader's Digest*, the editors sought to give the “Americana” series an air of authenticity, since it drew its conclusions from material produced by Americans. Such topics included gang activity in Los Angeles, race riots in Detroit, a public museum in Chicago celebrating “degenerate art,” and the prevalent usage of marijuana, “a dangerous narcotic.”⁸² Particular revulsion was held for the phenomenon of American “victory girls,” who greeted American servicemen freely with “hundreds of kisses” and other “unhygienic acts.” The war had driven young American girls into prostitution, causing a rise in venereal disease among twelve to fifteen-year-olds. “This [is] what we will have to expect,” the editors wrote, “if these Americans [are] to ‘civilize’ Europe.”⁸³

What exactly had Americans replaced their authentic culture with? According to *Signal*, the answer was capitalism. Americans had grown materialistic and decadent, neglecting the national values that had once made them “a great nation.”⁸⁴ With the spread of American economic

⁸¹ See: “Americana: Zoot suiters – jitterbug,” *Signal* (English) 1943 no.12, n.pag.

⁸² See: “Americana: Concerning the ‘Victory Girl’ and what ‘Collier’s Magazine’ has to say about her,” *Signal* (English) 1943 no.16, p.38.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.38.

⁸⁴ The magazine praised the example of segregation in Antebellum America. Multiple articles claim that America’s “values” had vanished and were “gone with the wind,” possibly referencing Margaret Mitchell’s famed novel of the same name – a novel that portrayed the “happy” segregation of whites and blacks on Southern plantations.

power came the spread of its societal decay. Certainly, the editors argued, capitalism would corrupt Europe if it ever gained a foothold on the continent:

Technical progress, the work of the European, is a blessing as long as mankind does not make it one of its idols as in America, where people now live on tinned food, near standardized shirts, standardized hats and standardized suits. Thinking has been standardized too and in American civilization there is no place for culture. Today the standardized American is opposing Europe and her century-old cultural traditions.⁸⁵

With the United States now at war with Germany, and therefore with the European Community, the prospect of unbridled capitalism gaining a foothold on the continent suddenly became very real. *Signal* depicted President Roosevelt as a dictator hungry for power and unwilling to step down, having broken the precedent for a two-term presidency in 1940. The image of Roosevelt as dictator was combined with the image of Roosevelt as “dollar imperialist” – a man who sought to control other peoples through economic influence rather than direct political rule. Roosevelt aimed to “colonize” Europe by destroying its culture, thus creating a new market for standardized American goods.⁸⁶ Unlike Churchill and the English aristocrats, Roosevelt was no buffoon, but instead a cunning manipulator using Lend Lease to spread American military power all over the world while simultaneously placing an economic noose around the necks of his British “ally” and of the European continent. For this reason, it was necessary that Germany create its own version of the Monroe Doctrine – the European Community – to defend Europe from foreign intervention. The average American had no real interest in exploiting Europe, the magazine explained. Because of capitalism, however, Americans had become a dumb mass captivated by “dollar values” and Hol-

⁸⁵ “The green heart of America: American reality – gone with the wind,” *Signal* (English) 1943 no.10, n.pag.

⁸⁶ Giseler Wirsing, “The U.S.A. after the Elections: Roosevelt’s Last Phase,” *Signal* (English) 1945 no.2, n.pag.

lywood films, now being led cluelessly into a war they did not understand. By waging war, Roosevelt was not only extending the interests of capitalism, but also distracting the American people from their own dire economic situation at home, effectively holding down the masses.⁸⁷

The United States, then, was a grave evil in the modern world, but, as *Signal*'s editors made clear, the ultimate threat to Europe lay not two thousand miles across the Atlantic, but directly across its eastern border.

From its very inception in 1920, National Socialism had identified Bolshevism as its ideological arch nemesis and the Soviet Union as the bastion of that ideology. It was therefore only natural that anti-Soviet and anti-Bolshevist sentiment, both before and during Hitler's rule in Germany, became a staple of Nazi propaganda. Time and again, frightening images of skulls, skeletons, grim reapers, rats, and spiders presented the Bolsheviks as the very incarnation of evil and death.⁸⁸ *Signal* magazine embraced essentially the same message, except this time Europe, not Germany, was the object needing protection.⁸⁹

The Second World War began, of course, with the awkward and uncomfortable alliance between the two ideological foes. *Signal*'s editors did their best to explain the logic of the alliance in historical and strategic terms: Britain was the only country trying to break up the European Community, and the Soviet Union was giving Germany important foodstuffs, resources, and materiel that would make Europe impervious to the British blockade of the continent.⁹⁰ The invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 ended this charade, allowing *Signal*'s editors to minimize their criticism of the English (a nation that many Nazis still admired) and to target the full force of their

⁸⁷ A. E. Johan, "Roosevelt – Emperor of the World?" *Signal* (English) 1941 no.18, p.4-5, 33-34.

⁸⁸ *State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda*, p.30, 65.

⁸⁹ *Signal* was certainly less crude and more nuanced than its domestic counterparts in articulating the threat posed by the Soviet Union, but its spirit, nonetheless, remained the same.

⁹⁰ See: "Half the world is accessible to Germany" *Signal* (English) 1940 no.1, n.pag. ; "Why Germany and Russia? Lessons of History," *Signal* (English) 1941 no.4, p.4-5.

propagandistic fury at the Soviet Union, the true enemy of Europe. The summer of 1941 was a complete turnaround from *Signal*'s original messaging – the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was no longer depicted as a strategic effort on the part of Germany for resources, but instead as a Machiavellian act on the part of the Soviet Union to deceive Europe and secretly buildup its forces for war. The German invasion was thus a preemptive act of self-defense rather than aggression.⁹¹ The goal of the invasion, according to *Signal*, was nothing less than the destruction of the Soviet Union and the Comintern, which had worked to undermine the sovereignty of Europe's nations by supporting puppet governments across the continent loyal to Stalin.⁹²

Much like its treatment of the Allied bombings over Europe, *Signal* depicted Soviet forces as pitiless mass killers, treating the men, women, and children in its path – including Soviet civilians – with unspeakable brutality. What differs between coverage of the Allies on the Eastern and Western Fronts, however, is the graphic focus on atrocities on the Eastern Front. Asiatic Bolshevism was a truly savage ideology, devoid of all humanity. Photo-essays depicted Soviet citizens – from the Baltic states in the north to Ukraine in the south – enthusiastically greeting the Nazi “liberators” freeing them from the shackles of Stalin's dictatorship.⁹³ Liberation was a strong theme here. In some photos, political prisoners are freed from NKVD prisons, while others depict German soldiers kindly offering a hand to Soviet villagers as they rebuild their homes, destroyed by the heartless scorched earth policy of the retreating Red Army.⁹⁴ In 1943, the magazine gleefully depicted the gruesome discovery at Katyn; dozens of graphic photographs show corpses rot-

⁹¹ “The meaning of the struggle: For the freedom and unity of Europe,” *Signal* (English) 1941 no.15, p.4-5.

⁹² Eugene Lyon, “End of the Comintern,” *Signal* (English) 1943 no.21, n.pag. This article was a reprint from the *American Reader's Digest*, used to show that even Americans perceived their Soviet ally to be an ideological threat after the war.

⁹³ See: “Joie de vivre,” *Signal* (Français) 1942 no.18, n.pag.

⁹⁴ See: “Horror,” *Signal* (English) 1941 no.16, n.pag. ; “Deux mondes,” *Signal* (Français) 1941 no.18, p.23.

ting in the ground as investigators and Polish civilians look on in horror. Again seeking to construct the Soviet Union as the physical incarnation of evil and death, the magazine concluded that the massacre had been rooted in a “cruel philosophy” – Bolshevism – that posed a danger to “the whole of Western culture.”⁹⁵

That cruel philosophy was analyzed in particular detail by *Signal* shortly after the 1941 invasion, in an article ominously titled “The Soviets came,” implying that what had happened in Eastern Europe – in Poland, Belorussia, the Baltic States, and Ukraine – could happen in Central and Western Europe as well. The Soviet Union, the editors warned, had no respect for national cultures. In every country the Bolsheviks encountered, they overran the population living there and forcibly altered life, preparing the country for incorporation into the Soviet state. Rather than the immediate imposition of a communist system, however, which would doubtless be met with strong resistance, the Bolsheviks pursued incremental change in five steps. First, the Bolsheviks removed high officials through abduction, imprisonment, torture, and execution, to be replaced by fellow countrymen disloyal to their nation. Then, the Bolsheviks seized the military and nationalized private businesses while placing political commissars in universities to wipe away the national culture and indoctrinate young people with communist ideology. In the final steps, independent citizens – farmers, workers, and skilled craftsmen – were forced off their land, robbed of their personal possessions, and pushed into collectives. Photographs depicted this spread of Bolshevism into Eastern Europe. Whereas in 1940, Latvians had “welcomed” annexation to the Soviet Union, by 1941, the entire population had been enslaved and reduced to fear, misery, and poverty.⁹⁶

Interestingly, *Signal* identified an underlying evil that formed the foundation of both capitalism and communism: “rootless” cosmopolitanism, or the uniting of various peoples under a

⁹⁵ Hanns Hubmann, “Katyn – A Record,” *Signal* (English) 1943 no.12, n.pag.

⁹⁶ Alfred Gerigk, “Vinrent les Soviets...” *Signal* (Français) 1941 no.17, p.4-5,34-35.

single ideology. Such unification sounds, in many ways, similar to the goal that *Signal* claimed Germany was working toward in its occupied territories: that of the creation of a single European Community. However, the proposed community, the editors clarified, was a political space in which the German hegemon united Europe in order to *protect* national cultures, not repress them. The cosmopolitanism that manifested itself in capitalism and communism was clearly destructive of culture. Multiculturalism meant, in truth, no culture at all. In the Soviet Union, peoples of all kinds were removed from their roots in the soil and molded into a mindless, homogenous mass. In the United States, national and ethnic mixing was rampant because American capitalism worshipped the almighty dollar at the expense of historic ethnic and racial segregation: In Detroit, black workers mixed promiscuously with white ones in factories, inevitably leading to conflict,⁹⁷ and in California, Mexicans had settled in traditionally white areas, causing a spike in violence. Mexicans were “harmless, good-natured people,” the magazine assured, but once Mexican culture was allowed to mix with American white culture, degeneracy ensued, fueling the rise of horrors such as jazz music and youth gangs.⁹⁸

Some historians have interpreted this language as racist. Such a label, however, hides more than it illuminates. It would be more accurate to say that, taking its large, multi-ethnic audience into consideration, *Signal* avoided stating outright that particular groups and cultures were inferior. It made its argument in two subtle ways. First, it showed that mixing ethnic groups created cultural degeneration and inferiority; and second, it showed that, by allowing Europeans to follow their old traditions and resist the corrosive forces of modernity, Germany had reawakened a force that had lain dormant since the time of the ancients: the “European spirit.” It is with a deeper analysis of

⁹⁷ “Americana: Between favour and hatred,” *Signal* (English) 1943 no.19, n.pag.

⁹⁸ “Americana: Zoot suiters – jitterbug,” *Signal* (English) 1943 no.12, n.pag.

what *Signal* meant by the term “European spirit,” and whether “racist” is the best term to describe its content, that this chapter concludes.

According to National Socialist ideology, the fount of German *Kultur* was the German “spirit,” the sheer willpower to survive and thrive in a harsh, unsentimental world. The German spirit, in the words of Joseph Goebbels, was a kind of “steel romanticism” which emphasized “intoxicating actions and restless deeds in service of a great national goal.”⁹⁹ This emphasis on spirit and willpower was celebrated most famously in Leni Riefenstahl’s 1935 film *Triumph of the Will*. Spirit was the source of all knowledge; the nation’s culture flowed from intuition and insight, not intellectual analysis.¹⁰⁰ The revival of the spirit, therefore, was inherently opposed to intellectual philosophies such as humanism, and yet, there was a contradiction here too. The Ancient Greeks, that civilization so revered by the Nazis, were not only the foundation of Western art, but also of Western philosophy – rationalism and logic, those scourges of the modern world. For those among Hitler’s followers who cared about consistency (and there were some among *Signal*’s collaborators), National Socialist ideology was confronted with an awkward dilemma: recognizing the value of Greek art while shunning Greek philosophy. To reconcile this contradiction, the most intellectual among Nazi ideologues turned to the great nineteenth-century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche.

In 1872, Nietzsche published his book *The Birth of Tragedy*, a seminal work in the revival of Greek tragedy in German culture.¹⁰¹ Nietzsche’s works were well-known for invoking strong emotion with their somber, tragic tone. Past German intellectual and cultural figures, such as

⁹⁹ David Dennis, *Inhumanities: Nazi Interpretations of Western Culture*, p.175.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.129.

¹⁰¹ E. M. Butler, *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany*, p.307-309.

Goethe and Kant, had often invoked classical humanism in their works, but Nietzsche diverted from this tradition, instead romanticizing excess and chaos. *The Birth of Tragedy* justified Nietzsche's diversion, explaining Greek culture and Greek tragedy as a dichotomy between Apollonianism and Dionysianism. Apollo was the god of "measure and perfect form," while Dionysius was the god of "inspiration, intoxication, cruelty, glory, rapture, and life."¹⁰² Tragedy could not exist solely in the world of the sunny and optimistic Apollo, but only between the clashing worlds of Apollo and Dionysius, the unending conflict between reason and instinct. Nietzsche felt justified, therefore, in his celebration of Dionysius, who was a necessary and underappreciated element in Greek culture. Most historians agree that Nietzsche would have abhorred National Socialism. Certain Nazi ideologues nevertheless saw great use in praising Nietzsche's cultural legacy. The Nazis celebrated Dionysian emotionalism over Apollonian reason, believing that, like Nietzsche, Dionysianism would usher in "the coming age of the übermensch."¹⁰³ The failure of Dionysian sentiment, on the other hand, would end only in renewed tragedy.

In 1943, as the German Wehrmacht began its long retreat from the Caucasus and the Russian steppes, Giselher Wirsing, the chief editor of *Signal* magazine, wrote an editorial explaining the purpose of the war, titled, "We, the Europeans." European history, like Ancient Greece, was depicted as a great tragedy. Wirsing explained that Europe's "civil wars," the unending conflict amongst European nations over the centuries, had been the continent's fatal error. It was time for Europeans to reflect on the history of Ancient Greece and learn its lessons for Europe's future survival. Greece had venerated beauty and had established the Western cultural tradition, but its fabled history was still, ultimately, a tragedy. Fellow Greeks could not find common ground with

¹⁰² E. M. Butler, *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany*, p.310, 314.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.314.

one another, instead choosing to fight amongst themselves – Athenians, Spartans, Thebans, Macedonians – and weakening Greek culture to the point of being overwhelmed by outside forces. The lesson intended from this analogy was clear: Europeans, like their Greek predecessors, would slowly decline if they could not unite. It was time for the European spirit to reawaken, ending Europeans' petty disputes and allowing them to muster the willpower to fight together in defense of European culture. "Europe," Wirsing argued, "is not a geographical but a spiritual conception."¹⁰⁴ What defined this European spirit? In language indirectly borrowed from Nietzsche, Wirsing argued that this spirit was the will to struggle for the nation (and the rights of all European nations), resisting the ideologies of Bolshevism and capitalism.

Some scholars have identified *Signal*'s message as exclusively racist, highlighting as evidence the magazine's depiction of the Soviet Union – its peoples an animal-like mass and its ideology Asiatic. One French scholar has gone as far as to argue that this depiction casts Russians as subhuman, thereby transforming the war in the East into a racial struggle.¹⁰⁵ Reviewing the magazine's discussion of the historical role of spirit, however, complicates this argument. True, *Signal* does in fact divide people into distinct cultural groups (and physical differences appear); this said, it avoids identifying these groups by blood. Multiple articles depict various ethnic groups from within the Soviet Union joining the European war against Bolshevism.¹⁰⁶ Although "Asiatic" bolshevism made men culturally degenerate, it did not mean that these men could not adopt a European spirit and become "European" once the ideology of Bolshevism had been shaken off.¹⁰⁷ For readers of *Signal*, cultural superiority seemed to arise from spirit alone; blood was not overtly

¹⁰⁴ Giselher Wirsing, "We, the Europeans," *Signal* (English) 1943 no.6, p.11.

¹⁰⁵ Sébastien Saur, "L'Union Soviétique dans le magazine Signal," *Histoire de Guerre* (July/August 2003) no.38.

¹⁰⁶ See: "One of them: Portrait of a Cossack," *Signal* (English) 1943 no.18, n.pag. ; "For the rights of their peoples," *Signal* (English) 1943 no.24, n.pag.

¹⁰⁷ Giselher Wirsing, "We, the Europeans," *Signal* (English) 1943 no.6, p.11.

evoked in the magazine's equation.¹⁰⁸ Bolshevism's source, ultimately, was Asiatic spirit rather than Asiatic blood. Here, *Signal* strove to be inclusive; the emphasis on spirit was meant to define the war as a civilizational conflict rather than as a racial one. Any European group outside of Germany could act as an "equal ally" within the larger European Community. Blacks and Mexicans in the United States were a different story, of course, and when it came to Europe's millions of Jews, *Signal* simply fell silent.

Certainly, the emphasis on the revival of European spirit offered a hopeful message: If Europeans were willing to join their German "ally" in heroic struggle against the imperial interlopers – the United States and the Soviet Union – then the European Community would become reality. This hopeful message was, of course, accompanied by a darker message, reaching to the very depths of Europeans' fears. According to *Signal*, the failure of the European spirit would mean the failure of European culture, leading to the demise of not just Germany, but the entire European Community. The scale of this "European tragedy" would be far greater than the tragedy that had befallen the Ancient Greeks: the continent would lay prostrate as it became the battleground in a climactic Third World War between the two rising powers, wiping away once and for all the nations of Europe.¹⁰⁹ As the war came home to Germany in 1945, *Signal's* predictions for the post-war order became evermore dire. In one of the magazine's final issues, it warned that the Soviet Union had successfully duped the Americans and the British into ceding it a "sphere of influence" in Eastern Europe. This inherent weakness among the Western Allies would mean

¹⁰⁸ Of course, racism toward Africans and Latinos seems explicit in the "Americana" series. German propagandists were not targeting their message of "spiritual" equality to these groups, however, but to a specifically European audience. In *Signal*, it appears the editors did not feel the need to stretch and contradict their own ideology beyond what was necessary.

¹⁰⁹ See: Giseller Wirsing, "The Seed of the Third World War," *Signal* (English) 1943 no.10, p.8. ; "The War Aim of the Continent," *Signal* (English) 1943 no.12, p.22.

ultimate Soviet victory in the event of a Third World War, and therefore, the spread of Asiatic Bolshevism across the entire continent.¹¹⁰

Ultimately, *Signal*'s message was a message about two alternative worlds, two possibilities for the future that Europeans had to decide: one deceptively hopeful and one crudely fearful. The fearful world was the world of a Europe in continuous decline, at the mercy of the United States and the Soviet Union. The hopeful world, on the other hand, was a world in which Germany led a new and powerful European Community, a kind of Pax Germanica on the continent where "fratricidal civil wars" were banished and the national cultures of Europe flourished. By using the same language of "peace" as the fabled ancient empire it claimed to inherit, Nazi Germany justified its use of force in solidifying German hegemony.¹¹¹ *Signal* showed that this Pax Germanica was already in full bloom in the early years of the war. National cultures, from France and Holland to Croatia and Romania, were finally being restored after decades of degeneration, learning from the example of National Socialism in Germany. Liberated Soviet citizens were being treated humanely by German forces, and were rebuilding their cultures once crushed by Bolshevik ideology. All of this was occurring because the Germans had reawakened the European spirit. If Europeans held on to this spirit, *Signal* assured, their nations and cultures would all have a place within the European Community as equal partners alongside the benevolent German hegemon. Europe's decline would be thwarted, its ancient harmony restored.

Of course, this rosy picture of harmony, cooperation, and friendship was all a lie; just a cursory glance at domestic German propaganda reveals this fact. As the Nazi newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter* had explained to its German readers in 1930, "spirit alone does not ennoble:

¹¹⁰ "The European telephone," *Signal* (English) 1945 no.4, p.4.

¹¹¹ Ali Parchami, *Hegemonic Peace and Empire: The Pax Romana, Britannica and Americana*, p.15-16.

much more is necessary for spirit to ennoble. What is that? Blood.”¹¹² For the National Socialist Party and the German Wehrmacht, the Second World War in Europe was not merely an ideological reckoning, but more importantly, a racial struggle for the very existence of the German people. Unlike the “civilizing mission” associated with Ancient Rome and the modern French and British Empires, Nazi ideology very narrowly defined what it meant to be German. “Spirit” was something that was inherent in the blood; it could not be learned or instilled in others.¹¹³ Nazi Germany was building a Europe for the Germans, not for the Europeans. In Hitler’s eyes, the nations of Europe were only useful as sources of food and raw materials; the fighting by thousands of European volunteers on the Eastern front was only incidental, and would have no effect on the postwar order. “No illusions about allies!” Hitler had once shouted at his generals.¹¹⁴

Most Europeans understood this fact; German repression was everywhere in Europe, although heavier in some places than others. In the east, mass killing actions had been initiated as early as 1939, and other examples of German propaganda in these countries openly portrayed the war as a racial struggle against Jewish Bolshevism.¹¹⁵ In 1942, West Europeans too began to feel the full force of German deportations, executions, and reprisals.¹¹⁶ By 1943 at the latest, the utter falsehood of *Signal*’s rosy picture was a foregone conclusion for most of the occupied peoples. Despite the reality of German rule and the inevitability of German defeat, however, many Europeans continued their collaboration with Germany – especially committed anti-communists and fascists – in some form or another, whether through administrative assistance, military service in the East, or ideological support.

¹¹² David Dennis, *Inhumanities: Nazi Interpretations of Western Culture*, p.260.

¹¹³ Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe*, p.8.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.319.

¹¹⁵ “Beware of Typhus – Avoid Jews,” *State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda*, p.122.

¹¹⁶ Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe*, p.8.

In recognizing the existence of collaboration, one must turn one's attention toward the alternative vision of Europe presented by *Signal*, a fearful world in which the American capitalists and Soviet Bolsheviks defeated Germany. Fear of the Soviet Union – and its communist ideology in particular – was already a palpable force in most European countries before the Second World War. While many collaborators and fellow travelers with the Nazis understood the harsh “excesses” of German rule, they still supported the Nazi cause precisely because they felt it was protecting Europeans from dark forces, most importantly Bolshevism.¹¹⁷ It is likely, then, that Europeans found the fearful message of *Signal* more persuasive than its pollyannaish counterpart. The most illuminating evidence for this argument is a 1943 article from *Signal* written by Léon Degrelle, head of the Fascist Rexist Party in Belgium. Degrelle's analysis of the war gives little impression that European volunteers on the Eastern Front were fighting out of hope for a European Community, but instead suggests that their motivation lay in a deeper fear of Bolshevism.¹¹⁸ By volunteering at the front, many European collaborators believed they were fighting for an equal seat at the table in a postwar order.

Of course, the fear of Bolshevism was inextricably entwined with a delusional form of hope. One must recall, for example, the movement for Franco-German rapprochement before the war. In the years preceding 1939, many right-wing Frenchmen (and left-wing as well) nursed the illusion of a rapprochement with Germany. Driven both by the fear of renewed war and the fear of communism (especially during the Popular Front government from 1936 to 1938), these French men and women were seduced by the aesthetic qualities of Nazi mass movement, which, if applied

¹¹⁷ In his essay “Lettre à un soldat de la classe 60,” written after the liberation of France in 1944, the French fascist Robert Brasillach acknowledged German atrocities like the one committed at Oradour-sur-Glane. He explained that, while German National Socialism was not the ideal political model for France, the future of a communist-free Europe depended on its continued domination of the continent.

¹¹⁸ See: Léon Degrelle, “À l'est, avec les Wallons,” *Signal* (Français) 1943 no.1, p.35-36.

to France, offered to shape the masses and to rejuvenate a French nation greatly weakened by war, communism, and the Popular Front.¹¹⁹ At the root of subsequent European collaborators' embrace of National Socialism was thus a longstanding primal fear of national destruction. As the German situation in the East grew evermore dire, high-ranking Nazi officials themselves continued to discuss the possibility of a new European confederation united against the Soviet Union and the United States, an idea strikingly similar to *Signal's* proposal for a European Community.¹²⁰

Examining *Signal's* political message raises important questions: was the magazine offering its readers mere propaganda fluff, or did its message, a nationalist strain of pan-Europeanism, have serious intellectual roots? Could the message of European unity be separated from its messenger, Nazi Germany? The next chapter follows the careers of Max Clauss and Giseler Wirsing, two journalists who shaped *Signal's* message and whose works for the Nazi regime shed light on the moral dilemmas – or lack thereof – faced by Germany's conservatives under the Third Reich.

¹¹⁹ Karen Fiss, *Grand Illusion*, p.189-190.

¹²⁰ See: Joachim von Ribbentrop, "Memorandum: European Confederation (March 21, 1943)," Documents on the History of European Integration, Vol. 1, 1939-1945, p.122-127.

Chapter 3: “Intellectual War Criminals”

“Through his writings, [Wirsing] persuaded the Conservative element to underwrite Nazism, arguing that the more repugnant aspects were mere teething troubles of a young, revolutionary party. This was the first betrayal of the moral integrity on which he so loftily insists.”¹²¹

– U.S. Army Intelligence Report
October 25, 1946

The years immediately following the end of the First World War and the revolutions of 1918-1919 were traumatic for Europe, and nowhere more so than in Germany, which continued to reel from political upheaval, hyperinflation, and the perceived humiliation of the Versailles Treaty (or *Diktat*, as Germans preferred to call it). In the eyes of many European statesmen, the cause of Europe’s sudden decline was the un-checked force of nationalism, which, they argued, drove Europe blindly into suicidal warfare with itself. The solution, therefore, rested not with imperial nation-states, but instead with European integration. Throughout the 1920s, groups such as the Pan-European Union and the European Customs Union came to the forefront of political debate on European integration, promoting economic cooperation and the dissolution of national barriers.¹²² The nation-state, however, would remain the dominant unit in European affairs. This development did not trouble Europe’s conservatives and, in fact, was welcomed by most; as some of their intellectuals argued, European “unification” could and should take place alongside the nation-state. Although it seems peculiar to an onlooker today, this nationalistic strain of pan-Europeanism was taken up with passion by young German students, including future journalists and *Signal* editors Max Clauss and Giseler Wirsing.

¹²¹ Final Report on Giseler Wirsing (25 October 1946), WIRSING, GISELHER_0016.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

¹²² Walter Lipgens, “Introduction,” Documents on the History of European Integration, p.5.

There was, of course, a darker strain of nationalism that ultimately prevailed, one that promoted not harmony but the philosophy that “might makes right.” Since the early 1920s, the leading theorist behind Nazi ideology, Alfred Rosenberg, had promoted the creation of “a European continent shaped along racist and Nordic criteria.”¹²³ As Yale historian Timothy Snyder more aptly observed, “National Socialism was an apocalyptic vision of total transformation,” a vision where the Aryan masses would rise up and annihilate the Slavic peoples of the East, reclaiming for themselves their rightful place as the master race.¹²⁴ Although they denounced Hitler’s rhetoric as crude, even obscene, Germany’s conservative elites brought him into power in 1933 and increasingly became fellow travelers of the Nazi regime over the next twelve years. The young idealists Clauss and Wirsing were no exception, striving to reconcile their political views with Nazism, a reconciliation that proved surprisingly easy for them even as they held on to the delusion of eventual European unification. Despite their serious misgivings about Nazism’s more violent impulses, both men legitimized Hitler’s regime through their work for *Signal*.

The careers of Max Clauss and Giseler Wirsing began at the University of Heidelberg, which both attended as students of sociologist Alfred Weber in the mid-1920s. Alfred Weber, the younger brother of famed sociologist Max Weber, was an ardent supporter of Weimar. In the early years of the Republic, Weber envisioned sociology as a pioneering field that would democratize the academic education of a new generation of German intellectuals. The goal of democracy, he believed, should be to sew together “high” and “low” culture, to unite the bourgeoisie with the

¹²³ Jürgen Elvert, “The ‘New European Order’ of National Socialism,” Anti-liberal Europe: A Neglected Story of Europeanization, p.119.

¹²⁴ Timothy Snyder, Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin, p.xviii.

working classes rather than dividing them.¹²⁵ In 1924, Weber founded the Institute for Social and State Sciences (InSoSta) at Heidelberg, which, besides teaching sociology and political science, aimed to foster a democratic orientation among young German academics. To this end, Weber constructed an atmosphere of “tolerant intellectual exchange” among the student body who ran the gamut of the political spectrum, from avowed communists to admirers of Italian fascism. Cultivating and maintaining this atmosphere of toleration and dialogue, Weber believed, would give rise to a new generation who could successfully guide the German Republic into the future. Democracy was a necessary step in modernizing Germany, and it was the duty of academics, therefore, to depoliticize academia, to create a “discursive coalition” among academics that discouraged those who wanted to undermine Weimar.¹²⁶

In 1925, Weber joined the European Cultural League and, the following year, founded the German-branch of the League at Heidelberg. The group promoted cooperation and exchange between European intellectuals, and many of its members went further in supporting a federation of European states. The goal of the league’s German-branch was more specific: to create some semblance of a community in Europe “without sacrificing German national identity.”¹²⁷ Indeed, Weber never believed in the creation of a pan-European state, promoting instead *Mitteleuropa*, a concept that took on various meanings but, in Weber’s mind, would mean a union of central European states (led, of course, by Germany) that put Germans on par with the powers of France and Britain. Despite Weber’s hopes for the group and his own democratic idealism, members of the European Cultural League trended anti-democratic and were, in any case, elitists.¹²⁸ The League enjoyed

¹²⁵ Weber saw problems with capitalism but also viewed the socialism behind the SPD and the Communists as too radical for its promotion of division within German society. Along with other progressive intellectuals, Weber became a founder of the German Democratic Party (DDP).

¹²⁶ Colin Loader, *Alfred Weber and the Crisis of Culture, 1890-1933*, p.108-111.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.113.

¹²⁸ The European Cultural League was founded in Vienna in 1922 by the Austrian Prince Karl Anton Rohan. Rohan promoted Catholic elitism and despised Nazism’s mass politics, although he supported the Anschluss in 1938.

great success among the students and faculty at Heidelberg. It is no surprise then that one of Weber's students at InSoSta, Max Clauss, rose to become the head editor of the League's official journal, the *Europäische Revue*.

Max Clauss was born in 1901 in the village of Offenberg, the son of a Bavarian textile shop owner and an Alsatian mother.¹²⁹ He developed an affinity for French language and culture at an early age (one could speculate because of his mother), and would go on to study French literature in Paris in the early 1920s. Later, Clauss moved his studies to the University of Heidelberg, where he earned a degree from InSoSta. Influenced by his studies in Paris and Heidelberg, Clauss became a fervent supporter of Franco-German rapprochement in the 1920s, joining Weber's German branch of the European Cultural League.¹³⁰ Unlike the teacher Weber, the pupil Clauss embraced the idea of a "community" of nations in Europe, the leaders of which he argued should be France and Germany. In general, members of the League distrusted liberal democracy and the rule of public opinion. Mass politics developed in the nineteenth century, they believed, had led to the horrific outbreak of the First World War. A peaceful community of Europe's nations, therefore, had to be led by intellectual elites who knew better.¹³¹

As the editor for the *Europäische Revue*, the League's official journal, Clauss worked to foster understanding between European academics. Beginning in 1928, Clauss ran a short-story contest judged by a panel of literary critics, including authors like Thomas Mann, publishing within the journal's pages the best stories written in German, English, French, Spanish, and Italian. Writing for *The Criterion* in 1930, the English poet T.S. Eliot praised Clauss' contest, writing that it was "visible evidence of a community of interest, a desire of cooperation between...different

¹²⁹ Willi Winkler, "Die Welt ohne uns." *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 19 October 2015.

¹³⁰ Guido Müller, "France and Germany after the Great War: Businessmen, Intellectuals and Artists in Nongovernmental European Networks," *Culture and International History*, p.105-106.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p.100.

nations” that would “keep the intellectual blood of Europe circulating throughout the whole of Europe.”¹³² Clauss had befriended Eliot after a visit to London in 1926, and the two kept regular correspondence throughout the later 1920s. Eliot, a follower of politics, expressed strong interest in Clauss’ proposal for a new “international philosophy of politics” based not in Marxism, but in “counter-revolutionary” nationalism. In the future, Clauss argued, Europe would be governed not by bureaucratic committees and leagues, but by a group of intellectual elites who, together, would guide the European community while preserving its distinct national identities.¹³³

Building upon his interest in Franco-German rapprochement, Clauss also became a leading member of the Comité franco-allemand de Documentation et de l’Information, better known by its informal name, the Mayrisch Committee. Founded in 1926 by a Luxembourgish steel magnate, Émile Mayrisch, the group consisted of eighty French and German representatives (the French in Berlin and the Germans in Paris) promoting the common national interests of each country. Clauss was one of a few academics within the German delegation to Paris, which consisted primarily of businessmen and industrialists.¹³⁴ Most members were veterans of the First World War. While still conservative nationalists, the committee’s members understood the destructiveness of nationalism in its militaristic variant, and promoted the creation of a French-German common market as militarism’s peaceful solution.¹³⁵ Despite its lofty goals, the Mayrisch Committee accomplished little and was seen by most onlookers as merely a symbolic gesture, a failure. After only seven years in existence, the group quietly dissolved in 1933, with one German member bitterly detesting his French colleagues: “The Frenchman does not think about Europe, but only about France.”¹³⁶

¹³² Valerie Eliot (Ed.), *The Letters of T.S. Eliot, Volume 4: 1928-1929*, p.xxiii.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p.716-718.

¹³⁴ Guido Müller, “France and Germany after the Great War: Businessmen, Intellectuals and Artists in Nongovernmental European Networks,” *Culture and International History*, p.101-102.

¹³⁵ Rainer Hank, “We Europeans: After the Loss of Innocence.” *Merkur* (Oct/Nov 2013).

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

While Clauss was busy editing the *Europäische Revue* and conducting diplomacy for the Mayrisch Committee in Paris, his friend and fellow Heidelberg alumnus Giseler Wirsing was pursuing his own career in politics and writing. Born in 1907 in the Franconian city of Schweinfurt, Wirsing grew up the son of a wealthy conservative businessman. His father imbued him with an intense sense of nationalism and, by Wirsing's own account, anti-Semitism. Enraged by the Versailles *diktat*, the father once encouraged a teenaged Wirsing to join the Freikorps Oberland.¹³⁷ Such experiences had a significant impact on Wirsing's later beliefs, but he would not join the Nazi party until several years after Hitler's ascent to power in 1933. Upon his graduation from the local gymnasium at Schweinfurt in 1926, the nineteen-year-old Wirsing began his studies at In-SoSta at Heidelberg, where he eventually earned a PhD in economics and political science in 1931. A bright student, Wirsing became fluent in English, French, and Spanish during his studies, and, from 1930 to 1932, worked part time as a *dozent* (lecturer) for the university.¹³⁸ Wirsing would rise to prominence in the last years of Weimar, however, as an editor for the influential conservative-nationalist magazine *Die Tat*, which he joined in 1930.

Although anti-democratic in his beliefs, Wirsing embraced Weber's idea of *Mittleuropa*, a federal order in Central Europe led by Germany. In his work for *Die Tat*, Wirsing espoused his hopes for *Mittleuropa*, one that was both anti-capitalist and nationalist. Intriguingly, much of Wirsing's political invective, during both the Weimar and Nazi eras, was focused on capitalism rather than Bolshevism. *Mittleuropa*, along with the rest of Europe, had to unite against the destructive force of *Amerikanismus* and its hyper-capitalism. Many of Wirsing's editorials for *Die*

¹³⁷ Department of State Airgram (23 November 1965), WIRSING, GISELHER_0027.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

¹³⁸ Counter-Intelligence Final Interrogation Report (CIFIR no. 32), Giseler Wirsing, 2 October 1945. Interrogation Records Prepared for War Crimes Proceedings at Nuernberg, 1945-1947 (Microfilm Publication M1270, Roll 28). National Archives Collection of World War II War Crimes Records, Record Group 238. NARA, College Park, MD.

Tat railed against “corrupt” industrialists and big business, often targeting firms such as Krupp and IG Farben for degrading the German middle classes in pursuit of profit. The editorial staff of *Die Tat* in the early 1930s was young, radical, and appealed to a similar set of beliefs held by National Socialists while rejecting the ideology’s more racist elements.¹³⁹ Wirsing was not a believer in the “Nordic blood” myth, but held on to a more traditional form of anti-Semitism instead, one that portrayed Jews as acquisitive swindlers who tricked decent, Christian people into parting with their money.¹⁴⁰ Wirsing did agree with the Nazis, however, that Jews were largely behind the capitalist conspiracy against Germany.

To Wirsing and most of the editorial staff at *Die Tat*, writing at the onset of the Great Depression, the central question facing Germans was the crisis of capitalism and the middle class. Promoting nationalism, anti-capitalism, and pseudo-socialism, Wirsing’s writings aligned closely with National Socialism – and, more precisely, with the party line towed by Gregor Strasser, not the racist Alfred Rosenberg. Despite this alignment, Wirsing remained an elitist; it would ultimately be the intellectual elites, he argued, and not a mass movement of the people, that would guide Germany into the future. During the last years of Weimar, Wirsing officially opposed Hitler and the Nazis, whom he regarded as vulgar and uncouth. During the 1932 presidential election, Wirsing, by this time a prominent voice in German politics, encouraged his readers to vote for Hindenburg. In early January 1933, Wirsing and a group of fellow writers sat down with General Kurt von Schleicher, urging him to replace the weaker Hindenburg as president and to act as a

¹³⁹ Department of State Airgram (23 November 1965), WIRSING, GISELHER_0027.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

¹⁴⁰ Final Report on Giselher Wirsing (25 October 1946), WIRSING, GISELHER_0016.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

check in power over the Nazis. Shocked by such a proposal, Schleicher “booted the young upstarts out of his office.”¹⁴¹

On January 30, 1933, President Paul von Hindenburg appointed Adolf Hitler as Germany’s new Chancellor in a conservative coalition government. Most believed that the conservatives would keep Hitler in check, but, as the world soon learned, such hope was a delusion. In the spring of 1933, most of the University of Heidelberg’s Jewish faculty were dismissed, including a sizeable portion from Alfred Weber’s Institute for Social and State Sciences. In April, Weber himself stepped down from the faculty, and InSoSta quietly closed its doors.¹⁴²

The years from 1933 to 1938 were pivotal both for Max Clauss and Giselher Wirsing. Despite their previous reservations about National Socialism – its vulgarity, its anti-elitism, its populism, its racism – both men accepted the demise of the hated Weimar Republic and recognized Hitler as Germany’s future. Enjoying greater success as journalists than ever before, they increasingly acted as apologists for the Nazi regime – not just to conservatives within Germany, but to a nervous international community. Hitler promised to reverse Germany’s acceptance of the Versailles *diktat*, rebuild a depressed economy and middle class, and restore Germany to its rightful status as a great power – all steps in the right direction. The regime’s negative aspects were mere “teething troubles,” they believed, which would be corrected in due time.¹⁴³

Clauss, ever the Francophile, spent most of the 1930s living in Paris and working as a foreign news correspondent for a number of papers, including *Dienst aus Deutschland* and the

¹⁴¹ Department of State Airgram (23 November 1965), WIRSING, GISELHER_0027.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

¹⁴² Colin Loader, *Alfred Weber and the Crisis of Culture, 1890-1933*, p.113.

¹⁴³ Final Report on Giselher Wirsing (25 October 1946), WIRSING, GISELHER_0016.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

Berliner Tageblatt, a paper that remained independent of the Nazi Party until its closure in 1939.¹⁴⁴

In 1934, the German Foreign Office placed Clauss on its payroll in return for Clauss' regular international reports for the syndicated press in Germany.¹⁴⁵ While there was propaganda value in most of his work, Clauss continued to write on Franco-German rapprochement, his favored topic, throughout the 1930s.

Wirsing, like Clauss, enjoyed success under the Nazis. In 1933, Wirsing left Heidelberg, returned to school in Berlin, and by October that year had settled in Munich where he accepted a position as a journalist for the largest newspaper in southern Germany, the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*.¹⁴⁶ Concluding that its owners were “politically unreliable,” the SS had purged most of the paper’s management in 1933, clearing the way for Wirsing to rise quickly through its ranks – from journalist, to assistant editor, to foreign editor, to chief editor of the paper in 1938. Despite his open affinities for Gregor Strasser – a rival of Hitler’s purged during the Night of the Long Knives in 1934 – Wirsing enjoyed the support of the paper’s publisher, Eher-Verlag, who also published the Nazi Party’s official paper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*. Conversant in four languages, Wirsing travelled frequently as a journalist for the Munich paper, visiting countries in Central and Western Europe as well as the Middle East and the United States. Based on these travels, he wrote books in 1933, 1934, and 1935 on international politics and on Germany’s role in Europe. Wirsing quickly became something of a foreign affairs expert in Nazi Germany, and formed close friendships with members of the German Foreign Office.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ “Church Policies of Nazis Debated,” *New York Times*, January 23, 1938.

¹⁴⁵ Aurianne Cox, “Le journal *Signal* : Presse illustrée et propagande allemande en France.” *Culture et médias sous l’Occupation : Des entreprises dans la France de Vichy*, p.194.

¹⁴⁶ Preliminary Interrogation Report (PIR no. 46), Giselher Wirsing, 8 August 1945. Interrogation Records Prepared for War Crimes Proceedings at Nuernberg, 1945-1947 (Microfilm Publication M1270, Roll 28). National Archives Collection of World War II War Crimes Records, Record Group 238. NARA, College Park, MD.

¹⁴⁷ U.S. Army Report (30 July 1945), WIRSING, GISELHER_0006.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

By 1938, Wirsing was one of the most highly-regarded journalists in Germany. As he had during Weimar, Wirsing continued to write invective against the United States and Great Britain, the two powers he saw as most responsible for Germany's suffering after the First World War and for the spread of corrosive capitalism. By this time, he had also become a fervent supporter of National Socialism, both publicly and privately. Wirsing endorsed Nazi expansionist policy in his editorials, claiming its ultimate goal to be the creation of a "Federal Europe" that embraced *Kultur* over capitalism and communism. In his private conversations, Wirsing claimed to have no illusions about National Socialism; the Nazis were, he recognized, a violent group whose political rule, nevertheless, constituted a necessary and inevitable stage in Germany's rise to national greatness and in Europe's confrontation with capitalism and Bolshevism. A 1946 U.S. intelligence report summarized his early justifications for Nazism:

To [Wirsing], Fascism, democracy, and communism were but symptoms of the age-old clash of cultures, part of the dynamic struggle between decay and growth, the pattern of history blindly and often brutally groping for fulfillment. Nazism was injecting new vigor into a people forgetful of its destiny.¹⁴⁸

In dismissing National Socialism as transient, a mere stage in some greater process, conservative writers like Giselher Wirsing and Max Clauss worked to make National Socialism more palatable to skeptical Germans. Both argued there was no need for opposition toward the Nazis, and, in fact, that they should be embraced. In building up the German nation, Hitler was also building up Germany to be the leader of a future Europe that was united against capitalism and Bolshevism. For this reason, the two writers took part in the Comité France-Allemagne, a French group founded in 1935 that promoted the greatness of Hitler's Germany alongside that of France and argued for

¹⁴⁸ Final Report on Giselher Wirsing (25 October 1946), WIRSING, GISELHER_0016.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

stronger economic and cultural relations between the two. Elated by the Anschluss with Austria in March 1938, Wirsing officiated his support for the Nazi regime by joining the Allgemeine-SS.¹⁴⁹

More troubling than their support for Nazism, however, was the silence on, and implicit approval of, violence against Jews and political minorities. For all his post-war claims about being a non-racist, a decent German who saw the moral faults within National Socialism, Wirsing not only stayed silent on Nazi violence in the 1930s but contributed to it. In late 1937, Wirsing traveled to the British Mandate of Palestine in his official capacity as foreign editor for the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*. Covering the Arab revolt against the British authorities, he conducted extensive interviews with Arab leaders, British authorities, and the Jewish settlers whose presence had sparked the revolt. In early 1938, these interviews became the foundation for Wirsing's newest book *Engländer, Juden, Araber in Palastine*.¹⁵⁰ In the book, he postulated that a future Jewish state in Palestine would act not merely as a national home for the Jews, but as the "Vatican" of international Jewry, an expansionist state that sought to extend its regional and later global hegemony. Denouncing the British government as the "throne of David," Wirsing argued that Britain and its capitalist financiers were central to the larger international Jewish conspiracy against Europe.¹⁵¹ The British had encouraged the Zionist project, he wrote, and were therefore solely responsible for the chaos unfolding in the Middle East – never mind the fact that Nazi violence was driving tens of thousands of German Jews to settle in Palestine. Wirsing, repeating much of the same anti-capitalist rhetoric against the British as he had in *Die Tat*, now injected his writing with a strong dose of anti-Semitism. This same anti-Semitic theme would appear in Wirsing's later

¹⁴⁹ Department of State Airgram (23 November 1965), WIRSING, GISELHER_0027.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

¹⁵⁰ N. Bentwich, "Review of Engländer, Juden, Araber in Palastine by Giselher Wirsing," *International Affairs*, vol. 18 (no. 1), 1939, p.133-134.

¹⁵¹ Michael Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence: Nazism and the Myth of Jewish Criminality*, p.137-138.

works on Britain and the United States.¹⁵² In March 1941, Wirsing spoke as an expert on Judeo-capitalism at the opening of the “Institute for Research of the Jewish Question” in Frankfurt.¹⁵³ Later, in November 1943, a declaration signed by Hitler himself was presented to Wirsing, recognizing him for his propaganda efforts against the enemies of the Reich.¹⁵⁴

Their writings in defense of Nazi foreign policy not only earned Giseler Wirsing and Max Clauss renown in Germany, but attention abroad as well. In 1938, both visited the United States at the behest of the German Foreign Office. Clauss, arriving in January 1938, began a lecture circuit across the country, speaking to universities and foreign policy circles about Germany’s future role in Europe and the world. Hosted by the Foreign Policy Association in New York, his first event on January 22, titled “The Church and the State in Germany,” took the form of a debate between Clauss and Dr. Henry Smith Lieper, the head of the Universal Christian Council. Dr. Leiper denounced the Nazi regime as “pagan,” criticizing its emphasis of race over brotherhood, the undermining of Christian faith, the arrests of Christian pastors, and its brutal treatment of the Jews. Clauss reacted forcefully, arguing that “National Socialism strongly rejects a godless society which, as is well known, is one of the principal aims of Bolshevism.” No pastor, Clauss insisted, had ever been arrested for his religious beliefs; all Germans were free to believe in a “brotherhood” between Germans and Jews. Clauss’ speech, a *New York Times* reporter observed, had not been well received by the audience.¹⁵⁵ Hostile reactions would define the rest of Clauss’ visit to the United States, as he travelled from New York to Washington, Los Angeles and Chicago.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² See: Giseler Wirsing, *The 100 Families that Rule the Empire*, Scotch Plains, New Jersey: Flanders Hall, 1941.

¹⁵³ Sam Miller, “Judge Hits Friendly Treatment of Nazis in Germany,” *The Jewish Advocate*, September 6, 1936.

¹⁵⁴ Michael Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence: Nazism and the Myth of Jewish Criminality*, p.138.

¹⁵⁵ “Church Policies of Nazis Debated,” *New York Times*, January 23, 1938. p.26.

¹⁵⁶ “Two Noted Editors to Address Assembly,” *Los Angeles Times*. March 12, 1938.

Still enjoying the success of his recent book on British Palestine, Wirsing received an invitation from Hans-Heinrich Dieckhoff, Germany's ambassador to the United States, in March 1938 to visit New York and Washington, D.C. Arriving in New York with his wife on April 23, Wirsing met with Henry Luce, the owner of *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune* magazines, as well as with Anne O'Hare McCormick, a correspondent for the European bureau of *The New York Times*. In Washington, Wirsing secured a number of interviews with the help of the German Embassy, interviews that included various State Department officials as well as U.S. Senators Burton Wheeler, Robert Taft, and Arthur Vandenberg.¹⁵⁷ With the help of Ambassador Dieckhoff, Wirsing secured an interview with President Roosevelt himself. Roosevelt was upset over the recent Anschluss, Wirsing wrote in his paper, and dismissed claims that it was the will of the entire Austrian people. Foreshadowing much of his invective against the United States in *Signal* magazine, Wirsing wrote that Roosevelt was "filled with hatred for all things German" and that it was his intent to redirect domestic dissent against the New Deal toward a foreign enemy, Germany.¹⁵⁸

In interviews conducted by U.S. interrogators after the war, Wirsing recalled conversations he had had with Ambassador Dieckhoff over German foreign policy toward the United States and Great Britain. While supportive of the Nazi regime, Dieckhoff loathed Hitler's Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop. He complained to Wirsing that Ribbentrop's policies toward the United States were "shortsighted," especially his encouragement of the German American Bund, which many politically-aware Americans regarded as a Nazi fifth-columnist group. Furthermore, Dieckhoff sensed a warming relationship between the United States and Great Britain. Wirsing

¹⁵⁷ All three senators became prominent isolationists in the U.S. Senate, critical of President Roosevelt's handling of foreign policy in the early years of the Second World War.

¹⁵⁸ Final Report on Giselher Wirsing (25 October 1946), WIRSING, GISELHER_0016.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

and Dieckhoff continued their correspondence after Wirsing's departure from the U.S., writing each other over the course of 1938 and 1939 concerning their opinions on the Munich agreement and Hitler's designs on Poland. Dieckhoff continually warned the Foreign Office that in the event of a war between Germany and Great Britain, the United States would be much more inclined to enter a war in Europe on the side of Britain. Throughout the spring and summer of 1939, Dieckhoff voiced his own concerns to Wirsing, warning that involving only Stalin and not Britain in negotiations over the "Polish Question" could prove disastrous, drawing Germany into war with Britain and, eventually, the United States.¹⁵⁹ Over the course of the Second World War, which erupted later that year, Wirsing maintained his support for the Nazi regime, continuing his work both as journalist and propagandist. His doubts about Hitler would persist, but he would only intervene at the eleventh hour, when Germany was already doomed to certain defeat.

In August 1939, just before the outbreak of war, Wirsing and Clauss accepted invitations from Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop to join the Propaganda Section of the Foreign Office. Here, in the autumn of 1939, both were recruited by the Wehrmacht to work on a new propaganda magazine, *Signal*, being developed for Europeans now being brought under the German heel.¹⁶⁰ At Wirsing's recommendation, *Signal*'s creators centralized the magazine's message around the New Order being constructed in Europe – a message that both Wirsing and Clauss seemed to believe in on some level. Despite his role in forming the magazine, Wirsing stayed with the Foreign Office for only a short time, departing sometime in early 1940 before the first issue of *Signal* ever went to the press. Goebbels' frequent meddling and squabbles with the Foreign Office

¹⁵⁹ U.S. Army Report (30 July 1945), WIRSING, GISELHER_0006.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

over its Propaganda Section had convinced Wirsing that his work there was largely useless. *Signal*, as all things in Nazi Germany, was governed by institutional chaos and competition; created and distributed by the Wehrmacht, overseen by the Foreign Office, and laid claim to by Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry, it was never clear exactly who had control over the magazine. Wirsing returned to Munich to resume his role as editor for the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, but kept in frequent contact with the Foreign Office.¹⁶¹

Clauss stayed on the project as an editor for *Signal*, becoming one of its leading personalities in the early years from 1940 to 1942 thanks to his political articles. Little of the magazine's content during this time was political, focusing rather on entertainment. Nevertheless, the hopeful tone set by *Signal*, especially on the new European Community being constructed by Germany, was largely determined by Clauss. Reflecting much of his work during Weimar encouraging European unity, Clauss praised Hitler as the German Napoleon bringing peace to the Continent, emphasizing "the urge for unity no European nation could now escape."¹⁶² Efforts to unite Europe after the First World War, Clauss argued, had all failed because they sought to keep the German people weak and divided. Now, with the help of a newly reinvigorated Germany under Hitler, Europe's nations were uniting of their own accord.¹⁶³ Of course, Europe's nations were not being united but dominated through German aggression and violence. Clauss could use the existence of governments such as Vichy, however, to argue otherwise. In spring 1943, Clauss published his book *Tatsache Europa (The Fact of Europe)* where, expanding upon his writings for *Signal*, he

¹⁶¹ U.S. Army Report (30 July 1945), WIRSING, GISELHER_0006.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov. ; Archives nationales de France, F/7/15307, Cabinet du Secrétariat général à la Police (L'Organisation de la propagande allemande en France durant l'occupation).

¹⁶² Max Clauss, "European Decision 1940," *Signal* (English), 1940 no.15, p.4.

¹⁶³ Max Clauss "Le mauvais chemin de la Paneurope," *Signal* (Français), 1940 no.17, p.4-5.

again spoke of the “beleaguered European space” – a space that was not “geographic,” but “spiritual.”¹⁶⁴ Amazingly, Clauss’ rhetoric on European unity changed very little from his time as an editor for *Europäische Revue* in 1926 to his time as a Nazi propagandist in 1943 – except now, the role of Europe’s savior was filled not by an elite group of intellectuals but by Germany’s Führer, Hitler. The Second World War, he insisted, would be the last “intra-European war” – all conflict afterward would be directed only at the non-European powers of Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union, after which Europe would arise “new and complete for the first time.”¹⁶⁵ Clauss argued, furthermore, that Germany’s central role in this new Europe was imperative to “impose order” on the new community. “Order,” the philologist Victor Klemperer wrote shortly after the war, was a convenient, “euphemistic pretext for the use and abuse of power” by the Nazis, justifying acts of violence and mass murder against other Europeans.¹⁶⁶ Certainly Clauss was aware, as were most Germans, of the atrocities being committed in the East and the purge of Jews in the West. It is difficult to say, however, whether Clauss truly believed in what he was writing for *Signal*; indeed, one must ask whether his argument for European unity and German hegemony during the Nazi period – reflective of his youthful idealism during Weimar – was, by 1943, merely an insincere, propagandistic contrivance. Clauss’ influence over *Signal* decreased significantly during its final years from 1943 to 1945. After the war, Clauss fled Germany for fascist Portugal, where he left behind politics and took up work as a shipping merchant in Lisbon.¹⁶⁷

Wirsing, back as chief editor of his Munich paper in 1940, resumed his writings on international affairs and on the progress of the war. During the period from 1940 to 1942, Wirsing

¹⁶⁴ Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich*, p.163-164.

¹⁶⁵ Carl Wege, “Das Neue Europa” 1933-1945: German Thought Patterns about Europe, p.10.

¹⁶⁶ Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich*, p.164.

¹⁶⁷ Guido Müller, “France and Germany after the Great War: Businessmen, Intellectuals and Artists in Nongovernmental European Networks,” *Culture and International History*, p.106.

often argued for more lenient policies toward the occupied nations, especially France, which could serve as useful sources of volunteers in the fight against the British. During his postwar interrogations with the U.S. authorities, Wirsing recalled a meeting he had had with Rudolf Hess in March or April 1941, just weeks before Hess' botched flight to Scotland seeking peace with the British. Hess knew Wirsing to be an "expert" on British politics, having read his articles and recent book on the British Empire, and discussed with Wirsing the prospects of an alliance between Britain and Germany. Wirsing found the conversation quite odd and only realized its significance after the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, knowing Hess had been afraid of a two-front war.¹⁶⁸ Wirsing's prominence attracted the attention of high officials in the government, although not always in a positive light. Throughout late 1941, he received criticism from some officials for calling for a formal "alliance" with Vichy France in the fight against the Soviet Union. Feeling the pressure of increased censorship, Wirsing decided to leave his position at *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*.¹⁶⁹

In April 1942, Wirsing was attached to the 56th Panzer Corps as a Kriegsbericht (war reporter) on the Eastern Front. His time there was brief; while never publicly critical of Germany's war efforts, Wirsing grew increasingly distressed over German "treatment" of Soviet civilians. Although never mentioned in his postwar interrogations, he likely witnessed German atrocities firsthand and, moreover, was painfully aware of the growing partisan movement against the Wehrmacht. Of course, Wirsing had never taken issue with Nazi brutality against racial minorities, so one must speculate here that Wirsing's protests over German policies were born not from any

¹⁶⁸ Department of State Airgram (23 November 1965), WIRSING, GISELHER_0027.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

¹⁶⁹ Final Report on Giselher Wirsing (25 October 1946), WIRSING, GISELHER_0016.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

underlying humanitarian sentiment, but from the cold realization that Germany needed allies in its fight against the Soviets. Wirsing claimed to have written several memoranda to officials in Berlin concerning the matter and to have received a curt reply from Martin Bormann asking that he cease all reporting on the Eastern Front. In December 1942, Wirsing contracted jaundice and returned to Germany for treatment.¹⁷⁰

Having maintained his connections with the Foreign Office, Wirsing decided to remain in Germany and resume his work with the Foreign Office's propaganda section. In January 1943, Wirsing joined the production team for *Signal* magazine once more as a writer and editor, and from then until 1945, largely determined the direction of the magazine.¹⁷¹ No issue of the magazine appeared in 1943 without an editorial written by him. Wirsing's employment with *Signal* coincided with the German defeat at Stalingrad and the shift in the magazine's message from Germany's good works to the triple-threat now facing Europe – the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. His experiences on the Eastern Front especially had a profound impact on him; while continuing to denounce the decadent capitalist societies of the United States and Great Britain, Wirsing devoted evermore space in *Signal* to the threat posed by the Soviet Union. Wirsing used his editorials for *Signal* to point out the inherent weaknesses in the alliance between the Western Allies and the Soviets, noting that any future Soviet "sphere of influence" in Europe would be used later as a base to launch a Third World War against the West.¹⁷² The Red Army, Wirsing wrote, was "employing a battering ram in order to smash down the solid gate to our continent." That gate, of course, was being guarded by Germany.¹⁷³ And by late 1943, it was clear

¹⁷⁰ Final Report on Giselher Wirsing (25 October 1946), WIRSING, GISELHER_0016.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

¹⁷¹ Aurianne Cox, "Le journal *Signal* : Presse illustrée et propagande allemande en France." Culture et médias sous l'Occupation : Des entreprises dans la France de Vichy, p.193.

¹⁷² Giselher Wirsing, "The Seed of the Third World War," *Signal* (English), 1943 no.10, p.8.

¹⁷³ Giselher Wirsing, "We, the Europeans," *Signal* (English) 1943 no.6, p.11.

that Germany had done a poor job as Europe's "guard": the Red Army had retaken the Caucasus, defeated the Wehrmacht at Kursk, and were advancing deep into Ukraine.

Accompanying Wirsing's increasing influence over *Signal* was his creeping fear that Germany would lose the war. Much of 1943 was spent outside of Germany, travelling through Denmark, France, Spain and Italy on assignment for *Signal* or meeting with officials from the Foreign Office, such as Dieckhoff (now ambassador to Spain) or Adam von Trott zu Solz. In March, Wirsing visited Rome to discuss technical and distribution problems with the Italian edition of *Signal*. Most of the following year, from summer 1943 to summer 1944, was spent in Paris and Madrid.¹⁷⁴ Wirsing was meeting with Ambassador Dieckhoff in Madrid on July 20th, 1944 when the attempted assassination and coup against Hitler unfolded. Dieckhoff was recalled to Berlin immediately following the attempt, as it was suspected he may have been involved in the plot.¹⁷⁵ Wirsing left Spain shortly after Dieckhoff, travelling first to Milan and then to Paris, where the city was awaiting the arrival of the Allies. Many of Wirsing's acquaintances in the Foreign Office were arrested and executed for their connections with the July 20th Plot, including Adam von Trott, who was supposed to have led negotiations with the Western Allies in the event of Hitler's death.¹⁷⁶ As it turned out, Wirsing was never questioned or recalled to Berlin.

Wirsing stayed on assignment for *Signal* in Paris until August 19th, when the liberation of the city had begun. In an article for *Signal* titled "The Last Days of Paris," Wirsing recalled the

¹⁷⁴ Preliminary Interrogation Report (PIR no. 46), Giselher Wirsing, 8 August 1945. Interrogation Records Prepared for War Crimes Proceedings at Nuernberg, 1945-1947 (Microfilm Publication M1270, Roll 28). National Archives Collection of World War II War Crimes Records, Record Group 238. NARA, College Park, MD. ; Archives nationales de France, F/7/15307, Cabinet du Secrétariat général à la Police (L'Organisation de la propagande allemande en France durant l'occupation).

¹⁷⁵ Counter-Intelligence Final Interrogation Report (CIFIR no. 32), Giselher Wirsing, 2 October 1945. Interrogation Records Prepared for War Crimes Proceedings at Nuernberg, 1945-1947 (Microfilm Publication M1270, Roll 28). National Archives Collection of World War II War Crimes Records, Record Group 238. NARA, College Park, MD.

¹⁷⁶ U.S. Army Report (30 July 1945), WIRSING, GISELHER_0006.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

mood of the city, stating that he was impressed with the “sympathetic” attitude that most Parisians expressed toward the remaining Germans. What truly affected Wirsing in private, however, was bearing witness to the utter collapse of Germany’s western armies in the face of the Allied onslaught. Continuing the war and the suffering of the German people, he now believed, would be senseless. The war could only end with the complete destruction of Germany, unless Hitler was willing to negotiate a separate peace with the Western Allies, whom Wirsing regarded as “so woefully unaware of the Bolshevik danger.”¹⁷⁷ At Germany’s eleventh hour, Wirsing now set out to oppose Hitler’s policies.

Sometime in mid-September 1944, Wirsing met with SS-Brigadeführer Walter Schellenberg, Germany’s Head of Foreign Intelligence. The two men had spoken earlier in 1944, in a meeting arranged by Adam von Trott before the July 20th Plot.¹⁷⁸ For years, Schellenberg had followed Wirsing’s writings in *Die Tat* and *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, impressed by his intellect and largely in agreement with Wirsing’s analysis of the military and political situation facing Germany. Both men agreed that Germany’s military situation was hopeless and that a peace agreement had to be reached with the Western Allies as soon as possible, before Germany no longer held a position of strength. Both concluded at the end of the meeting that there could be no peace so long as Hitler remained head of government; a negotiated peace with the Allies would require regime change. Schellenberg asked Wirsing to prepare a series of “moderate, unbiased reports” presenting the full gravity of the military and political situation and proposing specific

¹⁷⁷ U.S. Army Report (30 July 1945), WIRSING, GISELHER_0006.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

¹⁷⁸ Final Report on Giselher Wirsing (25 October 1946), WIRSING, GISELHER_0016.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

policies to be implemented in order to prevent the collapse of Germany. These reports, Schellenberg told Wirsing, would be distributed to high ranking officials in Hitler's inner circle, including Himmler, Fegelein, and Walther Hewel, a personal friend of Hitler's. Schellenberg offered to provide Wirsing with all intelligence, bar none, reaching Ausland-SD, the Reich Foreign Intelligence Service. Wirsing agreed to write the reports.¹⁷⁹

The first report was released in October 1944, written anonymously because of Wirsing's previous conflicts with members of Hitler's inner circle, including Martin Bormann. The gist of the reports, written until March 1945, was the necessity for negotiations with the Western Allies. In some of his more remarkable reports, Wirsing called on Himmler to settle the "Jewish Question" in a more peaceable manner to ensure smooth negotiations, fearing that a complete "liquidation" of surviving Jews would hurt any remaining chance at peace. One report called for the release of 60,000 Jews to neutral Switzerland, a proposal Hitler immediately dismissed.¹⁸⁰ Wirsing did not address the Holocaust in emotional terms, but rather in strategic ones. The Western Allies had begun receiving intelligence on Nazi extermination camps from the Soviets as early as July 1944, and by the winter of 1944-1945, they were realizing that the atrocity stories were more than mere Soviet propaganda. The release of surviving Jews, Wirsing believed, could be a basis for negotiations.

Wirsing and Schellenberg agreed to name the reports the "Egmont Reports," in reference to a quotation from Goethe's 1788 play *Egmont*: "It is not right to oppose the king, yet one must stand in the way of the king who takes the first unfortunate steps along the wrong path." Of course, the "king" in this quote was a not-so-subtle reference to the Führer. Both men hoped that the war

¹⁷⁹ U.S. Army Report (30 July 1945), WIRSING, GISELHER_0006.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

could be concluded as the First World War had been concluded in 1918, without an Allied-occupation of Germany and with a new government taking the place of Hitler.¹⁸¹ When presented with the “unvarnished” truth in the reports, they reasoned, Hitler might step down and allow Himmler to take his place. By November, however, it was already apparent that Hitler was “displeased” with the reports and rejected their conclusions. In correspondence captured by U.S. forces at the end of the war, Schellenberg had written to Wirsing:

It is thus an established fact that Hitler is incapable of accepting any view of the international situation that does not jibe with his preconceived ideas. We have therefore got to reconcile ourselves to the fact that we are dealing with a pathological case.¹⁸²

In all, Schellenberg and Wirsing released thirteen reports. That these men had believed the reports could change Hitler’s mind was a testament to how deluded they were and how caught up they were in Hitler’s alternative world. Knowing that the reports had failed their goal, Schellenberg discontinued them in March 1945.

Through the entire period from October 1944 to March 1945, Wirsing remained in Berlin as editor-in-chief of *Signal* magazine. Bombing raids over Berlin in late 1944 struck the main building of Deutscher Verlag, damaging a number of machines and forcing *Signal*’s staff to relocate their operations to a makeshift site on the outskirts of Berlin near Potsdam.¹⁸³ Amazingly, the magazine continued to be published as late as March 1945 (possibly into April) in as many as fourteen languages, despite the fact that Germany no longer controlled the territories where most

¹⁸¹ Final Report on Giselher Wirsing (25 October 1946), WIRSING, GISELHER_0016.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

¹⁸² U.S. Army Report (30 July 1945), WIRSING, GISELHER_0006.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

¹⁸³ Deutscher Verlag, 1944-1947. Office of Military Government for Germany: Records of the Information Control Division, Box 175. Records of United States Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Record Group 498. NARA, College Park, MD.

of the magazines were destined for.¹⁸⁴ By this time of course, even the editorial staff at *Signal* had accepted that the war was lost; there was no talk in *Signal* of Hitler's "miracle weapons." In one of the magazine's final articles in March, titled "What are your tasks after the war?," Wirsing called on Europe's youth not to trust the Americans or the Soviets, and to rely only on themselves in rebuilding Europe. Foreshadowing the future project of European integration, he called on all European youth to "renounce the narrow-minded repressions of exaggerated nationalism." "The welfare of every individual European people," he pleaded, "depends on the security of other nations." The future of Europe, he was certain, would be a "united Europe."¹⁸⁵ His prediction was accurate, and, ironically, made possible only by the utter defeat of his homeland.

On April 1, in face of the advancing Red Army, Wirsing fled Berlin. Refusing Schellenberg's offers to accompany him to Copenhagen, Wirsing instead travelled south toward Bavaria, reaching Bad Tölz at the end of April. He was arrested there by U.S. authorities on June 1.¹⁸⁶

The Americans who arrested Wirsing were less interested in his role as propagandist than in his role as author of the Egmont Reports.¹⁸⁷ Most of the interrogations that took place over the next year concerned Wirsing's relationship with Walter Schellenberg and his knowledge of the inner workings of the Foreign Office. Although Wirsing was an SS-Sturmbannführer (Major) at war's end, his interrogators concluded that his rank was largely symbolic.¹⁸⁸ Nevertheless, later

¹⁸⁴ Languages that *Signal* appeared in in spring 1945 included German, English, French, Italian, Danish, Dutch, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, Croatian, Portuguese, Slovak, Latvian, and Estonian.

¹⁸⁵ Giselher Wirsing, "What are your tasks after the war?" *Signal* (English), 1945 no.5, p.26.

¹⁸⁶ Preliminary Interrogation Report (PIR no. 46), Giselher Wirsing, 8 August 1945. Interrogation Records Prepared for War Crimes Proceedings at Nuernberg, 1945-1947 (Microfilm Publication M1270, Roll 28). National Archives Collection of World War II War Crimes Records, Record Group 238. NARA, College Park, MD.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ Counter-Intelligence Final Interrogation Report (CIFIR no. 32), Giselher Wirsing, 2 October 1945. Interrogation Records Prepared for War Crimes Proceedings at Nuernberg, 1945-1947 (Microfilm Publication M1270, Roll 28). National Archives Collection of World War II War Crimes Records, Record Group 238. NARA, College Park, MD.

reports heavily analyzed his collected writings, from *Die Tat* in 1930 to the Egmont Reports in 1944-45. While Wirsing had made few contributions to the policies and operations of the Nazi regime, one interrogator wrote that he had carried “an inordinately large share in laying the ideological foundations upon which the conservative elements of Germany could submerge their dislike” of Hitler; Wirsing had, in other words, justified the crimes of the Nazi regime. In this respect, the interrogator concluded, Wirsing was an “intellectual war criminal.”¹⁸⁹

The historian Ian Kershaw has argued that, unlike most European resistance movements during the war, the “resistance” of Germany’s conservatives in 1944 came the closest to actually affecting the outcome of the war. This fact was due, in large part, to conservatives’ prominent role in the Nazi regime; their “resistance” was a resistance from above, Kershaw argues, a “resistance without the people.”¹⁹⁰ The people who likely would have formed a grassroots resistance movement against Hitler – socialists and communists from the working class – had been arrested, imprisoned in concentration camps, or executed long before the war. Despite their outsized role in “resistance” near the war’s end, conservative elites had also helped make Nazism acceptable. Conservatives celebrated the demise of Weimar democracy. They applauded Hitler’s 1934 purge of the SA, the dismantling of the Versailles Treaty, the arms buildup, the Anschluss. Even worse, support for Hitler was still strong as late as 1941; many future “resistors” were complicit in war crimes and atrocities only two or three years before they would attempt to kill Hitler.¹⁹¹

Robert Paxton, an historian of Vichy, has argued that scholars should stop using the term “resistance” altogether in discussing German conservatives, preferring the term “opposition” in-

¹⁸⁹ U.S. Army Report (30 July 1945), WIRSING, GISELHER_0006.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

¹⁹⁰ Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, p.156-159.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.175-176.

stead. These Germans, Paxton explains, were not dealing with a foreign occupation but with fellow Germans; unique to this situation were the constraints of patriotism and legitimacy. Few of Hitler's opponents "were willing to accept the defeat of the German Army or the overthrow of the German state as necessary for Hitler's removal."¹⁹² Only as the Nazi regime grew evermore radical and destructive in the war's final years, threatening Germany's very existence, could conservatives comprehend overthrowing Hitler. Paxton writes that, while conservative opposition late in the war was commendable, "the legitimacy these men offered Hitler's regime by working within it more than outweighed their opportunity to restrain things."¹⁹³

The situation faced by Giseler Wirsing and Max Clauss is perhaps more understandable in light of these arguments. As conservatives, Wirsing and Clauss initially found it easy to meld their nationalistic views with Nazi ideology and to reconcile it with their European idealism, a synthesis of ideas on that would be on full display in *Signal* magazine over its five-year run. Even as their doubts grew about Hitler over the course of the war, however, they remained deluded on some level. If Paxton is of any guidance here, one must speculate that it was difficult for Clauss and Wirsing to identify the Nazi Party and Germany as distinct and separate entities. Even when Wirsing could identify Hitler as a threat to the German nation, the most he felt he could do was write a report that, by some miracle, might change the Führer's mind.

The most troubling aspect of conservative "collaboration" with the Nazis is that it helped enable the murder of six million Jews. Clauss and Wirsing chose to turn a blind eye to the Holocaust over the full course of the war. Wirsing himself seemed to make peace with Nazi genocide altogether, continuing to write anti-Semitic tracts well into the war.

¹⁹² Robert O. Paxton, "The German Opposition to Hitler: A Non-Germanist's View." *Central European History*, vol.14, no.4 (Dec., 1981), p.362.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.367.

The next chapter follows the careers of André Zucca and Georges Lang, two Frenchmen who collaborated in the production of *Signal* between 1940 and 1944. As stated in Chapter One, *Signal* magazine was not solely a German operation, but a European one, with publishing houses in Oslo, Paris, and Milan. Especially pertinent in the Paris operation were the unique circumstances faced by the French who, more than any other occupied people, had the privilege of choosing between collaboration, accommodation, and resistance. André Zucca and Georges Lang, dedicated and successful professionals in Paris before the war, found themselves suddenly confronted with the German-occupation of their country and the prospect of lost livelihoods. Rather than accepting personal ruin, however, Zucca and Lang agreed to conditions set by the Germans in working for *Signal* magazine – conditions which, in the case of Lang, indirectly threatened the lives of fellow Frenchmen.

Chapter 4: Between Collaboration and Survival

“Consider, gentlemen, how unbearable the situation was for a man who loved his business as one loves his own family I did not spend four years being hunted by the Germans so that later the French could attack me!”¹⁹⁴

– Georges Lang, Parisian publisher of *Signal*, May 14, 1946

“Men have lost their sense of national duty to the point where they consider only the success of the company ... [Collaboration] was just business to them.”¹⁹⁵

– André Thirion, 19th Arr. Purge Committee, May 14, 1946

In March 2008, a new photo exhibition opened at the Historical Library of the City of Paris, drawing tens of thousands of curious visitors. The rare color photos in the exhibition depicted scenes of daily life in Paris during an earlier time; three fashionable women promenade through the Tuileries in extravagant hats, a couple bicycles through the Place de la Concorde, and a man feeds an elephant at the Zoo de Vincennes as smiling children and their mothers look on. The photographs depicted the timeless essence of Parisian life; they were pleasant, escapist, almost innocuous. Except they were taken between 1942 and 1943 during the height of the German occupation of France. Suddenly, the “normality” of the photos becomes unpleasant and troublesome. Taken at a time when thousands of Parisian Jews were being deported, life in the photographs appears altogether not that bad, forcing some to ask, “Did the French suffer all that much under the occupation?” Many visitors to the exhibit were offended by the photographs which, in their eyes, violated the sanctity of France’s suffering during the Second World War.

¹⁹⁴ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 14 mai 1946.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

The exhibition “The Parisians under the Occupation” opened to a storm of controversy in Paris as no other photo exhibition had before, attracting criticism from private citizens and government officials alike. “Where were the photos of the arrests,” visitors asked, “the deportations, the executions?” Acknowledging who took the photos answered part of that question: the photographer, André Zucca, worked for the Nazi propaganda magazine *Signal*. But the Historical Library failed to disclose Zucca’s occupation, a glaring omission that nearly forced the exhibition to close its doors. Christophe Girard, the Deputy Mayor for Parisian Cultural Affairs, described the exhibition as “indecent,” saying it made him want to “vomit.” Determined to have it closed, Girard ordered that all posters advertising the exhibit around Paris be taken down. When the controversy came before the city municipal council, however, then-Mayor Bertrand Delanoë intervened to save the exhibition, arguing that the only thing worse than white-washing history would be censoring it. As part of a compromise with organizers, Mayor Delanoë asked the Historical Library to issue an *avertissement* (warning) for the exhibit and to distribute pamphlets at the front door identifying the photos as works of propaganda.¹⁹⁶ The controversy, however, would simmer until late in the summer of 2008.

Deputy Mayor Girard continued to describe the exhibit as “revisionist history,” with others attacking the photos as wholly unrepresentative of occupied Paris. In an article on Zucca’s photos, the historian Mary Louise Roberts asks readers, “Are we forced to conclude from Zucca’s images that occupied Paris as a whole was not such a terrible place to be?”¹⁹⁷ The answer: not exactly. Indeed, there are a number of unpleasant moments that creep into Zucca’s frame: hungry Parisians wait in line for food, crowds clog the streets of the city’s working-class underbelly, and a Jew

¹⁹⁶ Mary Louise Roberts, “Wartime Flânerie: The Zucca Controversy,” *French Politics, Culture & Society* 27, no.1 (2009), 102-103.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.104.

approaches the camera wearing the ominous yellow star with “Juif” emblazoned across the front. Zucca photographed these darker moments, but his focus, as propagandist, was on the wealthier, the more fashionable side of Paris. Aside from the obvious lack of traffic, Parisian life in Zucca’s photos appear strikingly normal – women show off the latest fashions at the races at Longchamps, teenagers enjoy an afternoon at the local pool, and social life at the cafés goes on unimpeded – that is, if we ignore the many German service members who enter the scene, whether they are leaving a show at the theater or attending Sunday mass at La Madaleine. As Roberts notes, “Zucca’s passion was a distinctly Parisian charm which even Nazi boots could not trample.”¹⁹⁸

A more appropriate title for the exhibit would have been “Des Parisiens sous l’Occupation” instead of “Les Parisiens sous l’Occupation;” “Some” Parisians instead of “The” Parisians. The photos did not reveal a society that enjoyed occupation. Rather, they revealed a society in which pleasure and joy lived in disturbingly close proximity to suffering and death. In the guest book at the exhibition, one visitor remarked, “The main thing was not to be a Jew or a resistor (terrorists, they were called!). The theaters and concerts were practically free. We young people could take advantage of it. Like eighty percent of the French, we never partook in politics.”¹⁹⁹

The Zucca photos opened old wounds for the French and provoked enduring agonies, not only over the history of the occupation in France, but over questions of *how* that history should be remembered. To be sure, the photographer Zucca was a collaborator working for *Signal*, but his photos nonetheless highlighted a facet of the occupation often overshadowed by collaborators and resistors. The vast majority of the French people simply tried to “get by” under occupation. The war years in France are endlessly fascinating for historians precisely because the French had the

¹⁹⁸ Mary Louise Roberts, “Wartime Flânerie: The Zucca Controversy,” *French Politics, Culture & Society* 27, no.1 (2009), 106.

¹⁹⁹ Clarisse Fabre, “L’exposition Zucca divise le public,” *Le Monde*, June 28, 2008.

privilege – if by privilege, one means the relative safety of occupation in the West as compared to the East – to choose between collaboration, accommodation, or resistance, to make tough moral decisions that lacked any clarity. This privilege was on display nowhere better than in the case of André Zucca. While virtually all of *Signal*'s correspondents were German, the publisher Deutscher Verlag allowed Zucca, a Frenchman, to fill the role of official Paris correspondent for the magazine. No such privilege was extended to other nationalities. The question of morality was murky in the case of professionals, especially those who faced the threat of German requisition: were Frenchmen morally obligated to sacrifice their personal livelihoods in service to some national “duty,” or was collaboration with the Germans acceptable under such duress, even if that collaboration indirectly threatened the lives of others? Visiting the cases of André Zucca, a photographer for *Signal*, and Georges Lang, *Signal*'s Parisian publisher, this chapter argues that decisions to work with the Germans under occupation often defied the simple label of “collaboration.” For some professional or wealthy French men and women (probably most), the instinct for self-preservation was more powerful than the instinct to resist. Zucca and Lang fell into this category.

On June 14, 1940, the citizens of Paris awoke to the sight of German soldiers occupying their city, a sight they had not seen in nearly seventy years. The situation had looked dire when Germany's western offensive began on May 10, but few Parisians could have imagined that in little more than a month, German tanks would be clanking through their very streets. Over the next four years, the French would look on in horror as the victorious Germans paraded daily down the Champs-Élysées. Of the dozen or so countries that Germany invaded between 1938 and 1944, France had the singular ignominy of being the only great power to surrender to the upstart Nazi regime, a fact that was, in no small part, a source of humiliation and bitterness for the French. In

one way or another, most Parisians grew accustomed to the thousands of German “tourists” who occupied their city, especially in the first two years of the war. On June 23, photographers for *Signal* followed Paris’ most famous tourist, the Führer himself. Hitler admired the grandeur of Paris and decided that he would annihilate the French capital not through aerial bombardment, but with German *Kultur*. “I have often wondered whether we should simply destroy Paris,” he remarked to his architect, “but when we have finished Berlin, Paris will be nothing but its shadow. Then, why destroy it?”²⁰⁰

With the city falling to the Germans virtually unscathed, propagandists for the Wehrmacht moved to control all media in Paris. Their job was not difficult to complete, as strict press controls had already been in place for nearly a year. Using a law from July 1938 that regulated the distribution of goods to various industries during wartime, the French government had imposed heavy censorship in 1939, most famously banning France’s communist press after the Nazi alliance with the Soviet Union in August 1939; the German authorities conveniently found the communist paper *L’Humanité* already banned when they arrived.²⁰¹ Throughout June and July, the Germans quickly moved to seize and requisition the most important publishing houses. On June 14, the Germans met with the directors of the major publisher Gallimard to begin discussions over the German requisition of the company. On June 30, the Germans requisitioned the Messageries Hachette, the courier services of another major French publisher, Librairie Hachette.²⁰² German control over the French press was formalized with the creation of the Propaganda-Abteilung Frankreich (PAF) on July 18. In October, the PAF was placed under the command of the military government in France,

²⁰⁰ Jean Baronnet, *Les Parisiens sous l’Occupation: Photographies en couleurs d’André Zucca*, p.5.

²⁰¹ Claude Bellanger, *Histoire générale de la presse française, tome 4: De 1940 à 1958*, p.10.

²⁰² Pascal Fouché, *L’édition française sous l’Occupation : 1940-1944, vol.1*, p.15-16.

the Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich (MBF). Along with the MBF, the PAF moved its offices into the Hotel Majestic at 19 Avenue Kléber.²⁰³

The central mission of the PAF was to manage all culture, media, and arts in occupied France. Receiving its directives from Berlin, the PAF in Paris delegated the tasks of controlling the press and disseminating propaganda to the Propaganda-Staffel, who oversaw a censorship apparatus in each region of occupied France (excluding Alsace and Calais).²⁰⁴ Part of that task included banning various publications and consolidating the press under a smaller group of papers that would be easier to control. By 1943, the number of regular newspapers, journals, and magazines in France had dropped from a pre-war number of 1,363 to only 796. Over sixty percent of newspapers published in the northern occupied zone were banned by the Germans, while thirty percent of papers in the southern zone were banned following the German occupation in November 1942.²⁰⁵

Among the most important assets in the hands of the Propaganda-Staffel was the Messageries Hachette. Before the German occupation, the Messageries had been, by far, the largest courier service in France, distributing over 160,000 tons of print media annually. In Paris alone, the Messageries employed a team of nearly four hundred cyclists to distribute daily newspapers.²⁰⁶ On June 30, 1940, the Germans met with the directors of Librairie Hachette to requisition the Messageries at 111 Rue Réaumur. Rather than allow a full German requisition of the Messageries (and potentially the entire company), the directors offered their “collaboration” to the Germans in return for retaining French control, “d’accord pour une collaboration complète.” After a period of

²⁰³ Claude Bellanger, *Histoire générale de la presse française*, tome 4: De 1940 à 1958, p.13.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.13. ; Although under the command of the PAF, the Propaganda-Staffel received its own offices not at the Hotel Majestic, but at another luxuriously-furnished building at 52 avenue des Champs-Élysées.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.10. ; Before the German occupation of November 1942, the press of the southern unoccupied zone remained under the censorship and control of Vichy’s Secrétariat général à l’Information et à la Propagande.

²⁰⁶ Claude Bellanger, *Histoire générale de la presse française*, tome 4: De 1940 à 1958, p.28-29.

negotiations, the directors agreed to sell forty-nine percent of the company's shares to the Propaganda-Staffel, leaving the other fifty-one percent in French hands.²⁰⁷ Over the next four years, the Messageries Hachette served as the main organ of propaganda distribution in France, including the distribution of *Signal* magazine. In late 1940, *Signal*'s publisher Deutscher Verlag appointed a German businessman living in Paris, Alfons Geubels, to oversee *Signal*'s distribution in France. There at 111 Rue Réaumur, Geubels set up his own office as representative of Deutscher Verlag.²⁰⁸

Of course, in 1940, Deutscher Verlag was searching not only for a distributor for *Signal*, but also for a publisher. With Germany now occupying Poland, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, and France, Deutscher Verlag's ability to keep up with the Wehrmacht's increasing demand for copies of *Signal* was stretching thin. In July 1940, Deutscher Verlag turned its attention toward a wealthy Parisian named Georges Lang and his publishing house, Imprimerie Georges Lang.

Founded in 1908 by a Jewish businessman from Lorraine, the Imprimerie Georges Lang was inherited by the founder's son, Georges Lang *fils*, in 1919. Over the next twenty years, the young and ambitious Lang built the business up from a small family enterprise into one of the largest publishing houses in France, its workforce growing from twenty employees in 1919 to over 1,500 employees in 1939.²⁰⁹ The main printing presses were located at 11 Rue Curial in the nineteenth arrondissement of Paris. In 1927, Lang used his multiplying wealth to open up an adjacent workshop at 41 Rue Archereau. The workshop, named Helios-Archereau, employed the most advanced heliogravure machines of the period. Heliogravure was a photo reproduction process

²⁰⁷ Pascal Fouché, *L'édition française sous l'Occupation : 1940-1944, vol.1*, p.58-61. ; Archives nationales de France, AJ/40/606, Dossier Hachette

²⁰⁸ Archives nationales de France, 72AJ/1885, archives Alfons Geubels.

²⁰⁹ Archives nationales de France, F/41/320, Note sur l'Imprimerie Curial-Archereau (19 mars 1947) ; Archives nationales de France, 457AP/164, Comité d'Entreprise et de Gestion de l'Imprimerie Curial-Archereau.

that allowed for the creation of large, colorful and glossy images – perfect for printing magazines, posters, and pictorial books. As one of the few publishers in Paris specializing in heliogravure, Imprimerie Georges Lang secured a number of important contracts in the late 1920s and early 1930s, printing books for Larousse, Librairie Hachette, and Gallimard. By 1939, Imprimerie Georges Lang had built a business with vast resources, the most modern technology, and an annual turnover of eighty million francs.²¹⁰

Lang took great pride in the business he had built, loving it as he loved “his own family.”²¹¹ Any suggestion at his postwar trial that his personal wealth had been earned through less-than-honest means drew sharp rebukes from Lang:

This business began as the small business of my father. I am not a financier, I am not a man of the banks. I worked hard day in and day out. I set up this house, a business that I built up each year to reap the profits of the year before.²¹²

Lang, though never particularly religious, converted from Judaism to Catholicism as a young man to better assimilate into French society. He married a Catholic woman and had two sons, born in 1917 and 1920, both of whom were baptized as Catholics.²¹³ Lang claimed an identity first and foremost as a businessman which informed his politics. While generally staying above the raucous fray of French politics in the 1930s, he was not afraid to voice opinions. He told his workers that he despised Léon Blum, the Front Populaire, and the “Marxist rabble.” Despite his antipathy for the political left, however, Lang maintained business contracts with leftist political groups, even printing the monthly communist magazine *Regards*. Business, in Lang’s eyes, always came before politics. In 1936, he even became a member of the Comité France-Allemagne which promoted

²¹⁰ Archives nationales de France, 457AP/164, Comité d’Enterprise et de Gestion de l’Imprimerie Curial-Archereau.

²¹¹ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 14 mai 1946.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Note sur l’Imprimerie Georges Lang (22 juillet 1940).

closer economic ties between France and Germany, ties that he believed would be good for business and that led to a business trip to Berlin in 1937.²¹⁴ Ironically, it was Lang's success as a businessman and his previous involvement with the Comité France-Allemagne that made him an attractive target for the Propaganda-Staffel.

When the Germans entered Paris on June 14, 1940, Lang closed the Imprimerie's workshops and fled to the Parisian suburb of Louveciennes, north of Versailles. Surprisingly for Lang, the Germans had allowed most publishers in Paris to continue operating under French management. Fearing that Imprimerie Georges Lang would fall behind its competitors, Lang reopened the workshops on July 18 and called a meeting with his board of directors to plan their next steps. The board consisted of: Raoul Dauvois (General Director), Robert Rime (Commercial Director), Philippe Le Bris (Deputy Commercial Director), and Lucien Philippe (Technical Director).²¹⁵

The imprimerie's situation was precarious, Lang understood, because of his Jewish birth status. Not only might the Germans attempt to "Aryanize" the business, but the Vichy regime could also put pressure on French businesses to pull out of their contracts with Jewish publishers. In a letter prepared for the Germans (a letter he would later come to regret), Lang recognized Germany as the "victorious" power, spoke of his conversion to Catholicism, reflected on his close relationship with Germans through the Comité France-Allemagne, and emphasized the scale of his business' assets.²¹⁶ Was this letter an implicit offer of collaboration with the Germans? Surely, Lang reasoned, the Germans would call on the services of his printing presses sooner or later, and

²¹⁴ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 14 mai 1946 ; Gisselher Wirsing and Max Clauss were also members of the Comité France-Allemagne, see pages 54-55.

²¹⁵ Archives nationales de France, 457AP/164, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau 1946, Affaire Curial-Archereau, note sur la Société Anonyme pour l'Industrie des Arts Graphiques.

²¹⁶ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Note sur l'Imprimerie Georges Lang (22 juillet 1940).

it was better to keep the business under his own control rather than German management. In other words, the letter was an insurance policy.

The Germans were, in fact, already eyeing Imprimerie Georges Lang before the letter was composed. A director for Deutscher Verlag, Dr. Matuschke, was sent from Berlin to Paris in search of a publishing house capable of meeting the monthly demand for *Signal* magazine in France. Only three publishers were identified by Dr. Matuschke: Imprimerie Desfossés-Néogravure, Imprimerie Créteil, and Imprimerie Georges Lang. As it turned out, Desfossés had been bombed during the invasion and Créteil was too far from central Paris, leaving Imprimerie Georges Lang as the only option.²¹⁷

On July 27, Dr. Matuschke and a member of the Propaganda-Staffel, Lieutenant Schmidt, paid a visit to Lang's workshops. Philippe Le Bris, the factory's deputy commercial director, met with Matuschke and Schmidt and gave them a tour of the workshops, where they were impressed by the scale of production, the modernity of the printing presses, and the heliogravure workshop – vital for producing photo magazines like *Signal*. Following the tour, Matuschke and Schmidt met with Lang and his other directors, Rime and Dauvois. Against Lang's hopes, the Germans did not offer the Imprimerie Georges Lang a contract to print propaganda; instead, they offered to buy out fifty-one percent of the business' shares. They knew of Lang's Jewish birth-status, but offered to leave him as chief administrator and declare him an *aryen d'honneur* – an honorary Aryan. "It's not for sale," Lang bluntly replied. He was prepared to do business with the Germans, but he was not prepared relinquish his printing presses and his inventory in the process. Exasperated, the two Germans then threatened Lang with a complete requisition. If Lang would not agree to sell half

²¹⁷ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 7 mai 1946.

of the business, the Propaganda-Staffel would be “obliged to commandeer the factory.” Intimidated but not persuaded, Lang dismissed the two Germans, a move applauded by his employees.²¹⁸

The promise to requisition the factory was not an idle threat, however. On August 30, a month after his initial visit, Lt. Schmidt again visited Imprimerie Georges Lang, this time to inform Lang that his machines and inventory would be requisitioned. Since Lang was of Jewish origin, the Imprimerie was classified as a *Jüdisches Geschäft* by the Germans, making it liable for a requisition and the installation of a German administrator.²¹⁹ Lang was asked to step down as the business’ head immediately. On September 1, 1940, Imprimerie Georges Lang was officially renamed Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, and, later that month, the Germans appointed two administrators to replace Lang’s board of directors: Sonderführer Cordes of the Propaganda-Staffel and Jean-Ferdinand De Roover, a Belgian businessman.²²⁰ Philippe Le Bris, Lang’s deputy commercial director, was appointed by Cordes and De Roover to oversee the factory’s day-to-day operations, possibly because Le Bris spoke fluent German.

As the Germans had technically only requisitioned the factory’s machines and inventory, Georges Lang and his directors Robert Rime and Raoul Dauvois still maintained shares in the business. All three men, in fact, still worked at the factory, albeit no longer as directors. Lang, ever the businessman, became determined to take back his factory:

From that moment, what was my thought? Obviously, to reconquer the house and drive out the Germans. I could not hide, I could not leave my house. I had only one thought: to tear it from the Germans.²²¹

²¹⁸ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 7 mai 1946. ; Archives nationales de France, 457AP/164, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau 1946, note sur la Société Anonyme pour l’Industrie des Arts Graphiques.

²¹⁹ Claude Bellanger, *Histoire générale de la presse française*, tome 4: De 1940 à 1958, p.25.

²²⁰ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 7 mai 1946.

²²¹ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 14 mai 1946.

On October 3, 1940, the first Vichy racial law was passed banning Jews from the civil service, the military, and all commercial activities (including the press). Lang was driven out of the factory at Rue Curial the following day. On October 10, Lang announced to Rime and Dauvois that he was relinquishing all of his remaining duties to them, fearing that the “religion of his father” might prove detrimental to the business.²²² Although Imprimerie Georges Lang – now Imprimerie Curial-Archereau – was in German hands, it had technically not been “Aryanized” since the Germans had not bought out the company’s shares; rather, they were “occupying” the factory space. With Lang now out of frame and the threat of German capital entering the business temporarily postponed, Rime and Dauvois began contacting French clients and urging them to move their business out of Imprimerie Curial-Archereau and to a separate Lang property. Sonderführer Cordes, however, soon discovered their scheme. On November 6, the partial requisition of the factory became a *réquisition totale*, and Rime and Dauvois were forced off the premises.²²³

Throughout the autumn of 1940 and the spring of 1941, Philippe Le Bris was the only French director to continue working under the Germans. Lang corresponded with Le Bris, asking him to do everything in his power to slow down German works. Le Bris ignored Lang’s correspondence, as well as his demands to hand over files on French clients to Rime and Dauvois. Under the direct supervision of the Propaganda-Staffel, Le Bris likely had little room to follow Lang’s requests.²²⁴ In October 1940, Imprimerie Curial-Archereau began printing the first issues of *Signal*, printing over two million copies by year’s end. In December, a “secret workshop” was also established at 14 Rue Curial in an annex to the main factory building. Taking up a space of

²²² Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 7 mai 1946.

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

roughly three-thousand square feet, the secret workshop was employed by the Gestapo to print various logbooks, administrative manuals, and directories for its members stationed in France.²²⁵

Over the course of six months between October 1940 and April 1941, Georges Lang sought out various officials in Paris to help him end the requisition of his factory, a requisition he believed was illegal. He contacted the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Industrial Production, the Prefect of the Seine, and the President of the Commercial Court – all to no avail. The Vichy laws were explicit that a Jew could not manage the factory.

In late April 1941, Lang contacted his friend Daniel Imhaus at Librairie Larousse, a former client, to discuss the possibility of an “Aryanization” of Imprimerie Curial-Archereau. At the time, Lang still owned a major portion of the business’ shares even though the Germans had requisitioned his workshops. This allowed the business to be classified as “Jewish,” justifying the Germans’ continued requisition. Lang proposed to Imhaus a deal in which all of Lang’s shares would be sold to Imhaus, an Aryan. With Imhaus in charge of the business, the Germans could classify it as Aryanized, allowing French management to take back control of the factory.²²⁶ In May 1941, Imhaus, acting on behalf of Lang, began negotiations with the Propaganda-Staffel to Aryanize Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, placing its workshops back under French management. What Lang and Imhaus did not know at the time was that Germany was preparing to invade the Soviet Union and recalling thousands of soldiers and reserve officers from France, a state of affairs that made the Germans more willing to hand over its management of the factory. On May 15, the Propaganda-Staffel agreed to the terms set by Imhaus and Lang, but presented their own list of terms to be met by Imhaus for the transfer of management to take place: first, to keep the name Imprimerie

²²⁵ Archives nationales de France, 457AP/164, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau 1946, note sur la Société Anonyme pour l’Industrie des Arts Graphiques.

²²⁶ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 14 mai 1946.

Curial-Archereau; second, to continue printing *Signal* magazine for the Deutscher Verlag; third, to print all publications assigned by the Propaganda-Staffel; and fourth, to continue funding and supplying the “secret workshop.”²²⁷ On June 9, the directors Rime and Dauvois agreed to transfer the business’ shares from Lang to Imhaus and to meet the conditions set by the Germans.²²⁸ In August, Lang officially signed over control of Imprimerie Curial-Archereau to Imhaus and severed all ties from the business.²²⁹ The official transfer of the factory from the Propaganda-Staffel to Daniel Imhaus took place on August 19, and Sonderführer Cordes was transferred out of Paris to the Eastern Front.²³⁰

Georges Lang’s departure from Imprimerie Curial-Archereau coincided with increasing economic pressure on the Jews of Paris. Lang resided with his wife in Louveciennes until November 1941, when he assumed the false name Gaston Lambert and slipped across the line of demarcation into France’s southern unoccupied zone. Living first in Clermont-Ferrand and later Lyon, Lang worked for two separate papers under his assumed name and with the assistance of a personal friend.²³¹ In November 1942, as the Germans moved to occupy the southern zone, Lang fled with his wife once more, this time across the Swiss border. There in Switzerland, he would wait out the war in Lausanne on Lake Geneva.²³²

While the workers of Imprimerie Curial-Archereau had applauded Lang’s rebuff of the Germans in July 1940, they were appalled ten months later by the Aryanization agreement between

²²⁷ Archives nationales de France, 457AP/164, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau 1946, Comité d’Entreprise et de Gestion de l’Imprimerie Curial-Archereau.

²²⁸ Archives nationales de France, F/41/320, extrait du procès-verbal du 9 juin 1941.

²²⁹ Archives nationales de France, F/41/320, note de Georges Lang du 4 août 1941.

²³⁰ Archives nationales de France, 457AP/164, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau 1946, note sur la Société Anonyme pour l’Industrie des Arts Graphiques.

²³¹ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Lettre de Spiral (8 janvier 1946) ; Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Lettre de Pouey d’Ossau.

²³² Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Certificat de séjour la municipalité de Lausanne (5 septembre 1945).

the directors and the Propaganda-Staffel. “These [directors] categorically refused to place themselves at the disposal of the Germans,” one typographer recalled, “I asked myself how it was possible that in June 1941, these same men could agree to do the work of the Germans.” Another employee commented that the workers were “ashamed” to have a Gestapo office running out of the factory.²³³ What angered workers the most, however, were the deteriorating working conditions at the factory, conditions they believed their French directors were complicit in creating. By 1943, the factory was printing over 800,000 copies of *Signal* per issue, requiring workers in the helio-gravure shop to work sixty-five-hour work weeks with decreased wages.²³⁴

Over the course of the occupation, the directors of Imprimerie Curial-Archereau oversaw a massive printing operation that worked almost exclusively with German propaganda and far-right French papers. In addition to *Signal* magazine, the factory printed such works as *Die Wehrmacht* (a military-themed magazine), *Voix Ouvrière*, *Hop et Voilà*, *Femmes Françaises*, and *Union Française*.²³⁵ The factory also accepted a contract with Jacques Doriot’s Parti Populaire Français, printing various books and pamphlets for the fascist group.²³⁶ The most controversial agreement, however, was the decision by the directors to continue funding the “secret workshop,” where French workers printed Gestapo logbooks, directories, propaganda pamphlets and posters, and lists of known resistance members in France. The workshop’s small staff, segregated from the workers in the main factory building, were hired and sworn to secrecy by the Gestapo. Nevertheless, its workers were paid by Imprimerie Curial-Archereau and received their paper supply and machines

²³³ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 7 mai 1946.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ Archives nationales de France, 457AP/164, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau 1946, Réponse du Comité d’Entreprise et de Gestion de l’Imprimerie Curial-Archereau.

²³⁶ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 7 mai 1946.

from the main factory as well.²³⁷ The secret workshop at Imprimerie Curial-Archereau would leave its mark on France printing the infamous *affiches des fusillés*, plastered on the walls of the Paris Métro and on public buildings throughout France, demanding the capture of French “terrorists” – members of the resistance.²³⁸ As it turned out, many of those denounced on paper supplied by the Imprimerie Curial-Archereau would be arrested and executed by the Germans.

The Parisian collaboration with *Signal* magazine from 1940 to 1944 involved more than simply publishers and couriers. Throughout the occupation, a number of political figures, journalists, and photographers contributed articles to the magazine. The French cartoonist and caricaturist Anton Sailer, for example, was even given his own office at Deutscher Verlag’s Paris headquarters. Despite being a German operation, Deutscher Verlag hired a handful of Frenchmen to work as regular contributors for *Signal*, a privilege not extended to any other nationality. Among those select-Frenchmen was photographer and Paris correspondent André Zucca, the only regular, non-German correspondent for the magazine.

André Zucca was born in 1897 as the only child of an Italian mother, a seamstress. He had no memory of his father, who refused to recognize him as his son. The father soon abandoned Zucca’s mother, leaving her to raise the young André alone and in poverty. Zucca spent his youth in Paris until 1911 when, at the age of fourteen, he and his mother immigrated to the United States. There, he lived in New York with his mother and three uncles who had found success in the city. Years later, Zucca’s daughter Nicole would recall her father’s lifelong fondness for America, a

²³⁷ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 14 mai 1946 ; Archives nationales de France, 457AP/164, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau 1946, Réponse du Comité d’Entreprise et de Gestion de l’Imprimerie Curial-Archereau.

²³⁸ Archives nationales de France, 457AP/164, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau 1946, note sur la Société Anonyme pour l’Industrie des Arts Graphiques.

fondness which stemmed from his early years in New York. Whatever the reason (it remains unclear), Zucca returned to France in 1915 at the age of seventeen and enlisted in the French Army. At the Battle of Verdun in 1916, Zucca received extensive wounds and lost the use of a lung, a sacrifice for which he was awarded the Croix de Guerre.²³⁹ Despite the injury, he remained in the military until the end of the war in 1918, after which he returned to Paris and worked various odd jobs. Zucca eventually picked up photography, first as a hobby and later as a career. For most of the 1920s, Zucca worked as a portrait photographer for the theater and film review *Comœdia*.²⁴⁰

Zucca's success in photography grew throughout the 1920s and 1930s as he expanded his work to the papers *Paris-Soir* and *L'Illustration*. In 1935, he made his first foreign reports from Italy, Yugoslavia, and Greece. In 1937, he boarded a cargo ship at Le Havre and travelled from France to the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, and eventually Japan. Long stopovers along the route allowed Zucca to photograph and write reports from Greece, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt, Yemen, Singapore, Indochina, China, and Japan.²⁴¹ Upon his return to France in 1938, he became a photographer for the French magazine *Match* and sold some of his reports to the British magazine *Picture Post*. Zucca's photos from the 1930s give little impression of any ideological underpinnings. When not photographing peasant life and cultural scenes from abroad, he was photographing street scenes in Paris as well as bodybuilders, acrobats, ballet dancers, and actors.²⁴² At the outbreak of war in 1939, Zucca was attached as a photographer and war correspondent to the press service of the Deuxième Bureau, France's intelligence agency, where he spent the winter of 1939-1940 in Karelia reporting on the Winter War between Finland and the Soviet Union. In the spring of 1940, he returned to France where he covered the *drôle de guerre*, photographing the

²³⁹ Archives nationales de France, Z/6NL/118, Dossier 2908, Interrogatoire d'André Zucca du 10 octobre 1944.

²⁴⁰ Jean Baronnet, *Les Parisiens sous l'Occupation : Photographies en couleurs d'André Zucca*, p.174.

²⁴¹ Archives nationales de France, 218/Mi/4.

²⁴² Archives nationales de France, 218/Mi/1.

mundane lives of French soldiers at the Maginot Line. In one of Zucca's more memorable photographs, French soldiers posed mockingly in front of a captured swastika flag.²⁴³ While comical, the photo was also foreboding; in only a few months, Zucca would be photographing the same flag adorning public buildings and monuments throughout Paris.

Of all the professions to be censored by the Germans during the occupation, one of the hardest hit was photography. Fearing photographers would act as agents of the Allied intelligence services, the Germans issued an ordinance on September 16, 1940 prohibiting all outdoor photography in the occupied zone. With the film market strictly regulated by the Germans, all professional photographers had to obtain and regularly renew their press credentials with the Propaganda-Staffel in order to gain access to film. Under this new ordinance, many photographers who worked outside of the press were unable to support themselves. As if the restriction on outdoor photography had not been bad enough, the Germans also required that all works of photography be submitted to and approved by the Propaganda-Staffel before publishing.²⁴⁴ André Zucca found these new regulations to be suffocating, but thanks to his continued work for *L'Illustration*, he still maintained access to film and a regular, albeit decreased, salary.

On July 28, 1941, Zucca was contacted by Anton Sailer from Deutscher Verlag requesting his professional services for *Signal* magazine. The magazine's editors had done reports from Paris before, but they were now looking for a regular correspondent to report on the city and on France. Zucca's photography for *Paris-Soir* and *L'Illustration* made him an ideal candidate for *Signal* magazine. "Your reputation as a photographer has been known to us for a long time," Sailer wrote, "and we hope that your work for our Edition will be inspired by your previous works."²⁴⁵ Zucca

²⁴³ Archives nationales de France, 218/Mi/4.

²⁴⁴ Jean Baronnet, *Les Parisiens sous l'Occupation : Photographies en couleurs d'André Zucca*, p.5-6.

²⁴⁵ Archives nationales de France, Z/6NL/118, Dossier 2908, Lettre du Deutscher Verlag du 28 juillet 1941.

quickly accepted the offer. As a correspondent for *Signal*, Zucca received 16,000 francs per month and an Ausweis (ID card) from the German authorities, which allowed him to photograph outdoor scenes in Paris and northern France without restriction. He also received new Rolleiflex and Leica cameras, rolls of black and white film, and extremely rare rolls of Agfacolor film.²⁴⁶ Agfa, part of the IG Farben group, had been a fierce competitor with the American film company Eastman Kodak before the war. In response to the development of the Technicolor and Kodachrome processes, Agfa developed its own Agfacolor process.²⁴⁷ The war removed Agfa's major competitors, but the stock of color film in Europe would remain low throughout the early 1940s. In accepting his work for *Signal*, Zucca became one in only a handful of professionals in Western Europe with access to color film.²⁴⁸

Over the next three years, Zucca operated out of a photo-lab and office at his home at 8 Rue Changarnier in the twelfth arrondissement. There, he received regular assignments from Deutscher Verlag that required him to travel throughout France for brief periods of time. Among his first assignments was photographing the private home of Vichy's head of state, Maréchal Pétain. Other assignment topics included fascist youth camps in Vichy, the arrival of French POWs returned from Germany, and Frenchmen of the Légion des volontaires français (LVF) departing France for the Eastern Front. Zucca's most common assignment, however, involved photographing the destruction wrought by Allied bombing raids over France.²⁴⁹ In a report dated March 8, 1943, Zucca photographed the Allied destruction of French homes in Rennes, which had resulted in dozens of deaths. Zucca captioned the report, "The Liberators came through here! The military objectives of the Allies in France," an ironic title intended to spark public outrage against Allied

²⁴⁶ Jean Baronnet, *Les Parisiens sous l'Occupation : Photographies en couleurs d'André Zucca*, p.7.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.7. ; The German film company UFA used Agfacolor to film fifteen color films during the Nazi era.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.6.

²⁴⁹ See : Archives nationales de France, 218/Mi/1-4.

bombing raids.²⁵⁰ When he was not working on assigned reports, Zucca was using the perks of his position to do his own freelance photography, photographing street scenes in Paris – most of which would comprise the controversial 2008 exhibition “The Parisians under the Occupation.” Throughout his assigned reporting and freelance work, Zucca’s camera never shied away from the darker aspects of the occupation in France, whether it was Parisian Jews wearing the yellow star or LVF members posing with a scrawled message reading “Mort aux Juifs!” – “Death to the Jews!” Of course, such images were never included in *Signal* by its editors.

Without a doubt, Zucca’s reports carried great propaganda value for *Signal*, and officials at Deutscher Verlag were initially pleased with his photographs. Over the course of his three-year career, however, Zucca seemed to grow disinterested, even repulsed, by his assignments. His post-liberation court records contain a series of increasingly angry letters from Anton Sailer at Deutscher Verlag, upset over the diminishing quality and quantity of Zucca’s work. In September 1942, Sailer complained about Zucca’s subpar effort on a recent report and warned him, “you seem to take your homework too lightly...Please know that we are not ignorant of what you are capable of.”²⁵¹ In a subsequent letter, Sailer wrote more bluntly, “you have not acted in the interest of *Signal*.”²⁵² By late 1943, Zucca was submitting many of his reports late or simply failing to report at all. He blamed his tardiness on health issues stemming from his lung injury at Verdun in 1916. An exasperated Sailer wrote to Zucca blasting his truant behavior and demanding a doctor’s note with the “date of illness” and the “time needed for a cure.”²⁵³ Sailer sent Zucca his most biting letter in March 1944:

²⁵⁰ Archives nationales de France, 218/Mi/4.

²⁵¹ Archives nationales de France, Z/6NL/118, Dossier 2908, Lettre du Deutscher Verlag du 28 septembre 1942.

²⁵² Archives nationales de France, Z/6NL/118, Dossier 2908, Lettre du Deutscher Verlag du 13 février 1943.

²⁵³ Archives nationales de France, Z/6NL/118, Dossier 2908, Lettre du Deutscher Verlag du 8 septembre 1943.

I hope not to be compelled to follow up on your unseemly discipline, which consists of leaving abruptly and following a protocol of your own liking. For the fourth time in thirty months, you have presented me with your resignation. This behavior is intolerable, and I beg you to remember that you are required...to lend your professional skill to the Deutscher Verlag. You are absolutely not allowed to act on your own whim and fancy. I grant you forty-eight hours to reflect on the consequences of your indiscipline and to relax your nervous system which I advise you to monitor more carefully.²⁵⁴

Despite offering multiple resignations, Zucca continued to photograph for *Signal* until the very end of the occupation. His final report to appear in the magazine was from the Parisian funeral of Philippe Henriot, a Vichy propagandist once nicknamed the “French Goebbels,” at the Hôtel de Ville in July 1944.²⁵⁵

As quickly as it had begun, the German occupation of Paris melted away in late August 1944. To be sure, sporadic shooting and street battles ensued throughout Paris in the final days of occupation, but the city fell to the Allied armies with relatively little resistance from German forces. The French capital had cheated death once again, escaping the horrific fate met by other great cities such as Rotterdam and Warsaw. The transition from occupation to liberation occurred seamlessly in Zucca’s photographs, the clearest example being a photograph of the Rue de Rivoli in September 1944, its focus on a column adorned by a Union Jack. Only weeks earlier, Zucca had photographed from the same spot, its focus then being on a Nazi swastika flag. Zucca continued photographing public spaces and cafés in the autumn of 1944, his frame no longer filled by Germans but by Americans and Brits. Scanning through his collected *œuvre* at the Archives nationales de France – thousands of photographs on four reels of microfilm – one gets a sense of Zucca not as a partisan or ideologue, but as a documentarian. The occupation and liberation did not interrupt Zucca’s freelance work. Only months after photographing German officers at a chic

²⁵⁴ Archives nationales de France, Z/6NL/118, Dossier 2908, Lettre du Deutscher Verlag du 27 mars 1944.

²⁵⁵ Archives nationales de France, Z/6NL/118, Dossier 2908, Interrogatoire d'André Zucca du 10 octobre 1944.

Parisian café, Zucca was photographing portraits of resistance fighters such as Colonel Henri Rol-Tanguy.²⁵⁶ While Zucca looked forward to continuing his career in a postwar France, however, his neighbors at 8 Rue Changarnier refused to forget his activities during the occupation.

In early October 1944, the police station of the Quartier du Bel-Air received a letter accusing a local photographer of collaboration with the Germans. Included with the letter were two issues of *Signal* magazine. The magazines contained reports on Allied bombings over Paris and a headline screaming “Montmartre sous les bombes!” One dramatic photo depicted a mother and father grieving over the coffin of their deceased son. Beneath the photo was the name of the photographer underlined in red: André Zucca.²⁵⁷

On October 10, Zucca was apprehended at his apartment and detained at the Bel-Air police station. Three of Zucca’s neighbors were brought in for questioning. For years, they had watched Zucca suspiciously as he acquired wealth from his work for the Germans. “The Zucca household materially improved during the occupation,” one neighbor asserted to the police commissioner.²⁵⁸ Wealth was a major fixation of the neighbors: Zucca had used his income from *Signal* to create a photo-lab inside his home, they claimed, and, in 1942, he had bought a country estate outside the commune of Dreux. The portrait his neighbors painted depicted not only a man of greed, but a man of deep political sympathies with the Germans. One neighbor told police that, while he had only ever spoken with Zucca on a few occasions, Zucca had come across to him as a “Germanophile.” On one occasion, during the repatriation of French POWs to France in 1942, Zucca had invited the neighbor into his apartment to look at photographs of smiling, healthy French prisoners. “Zucca commented that Hitler had made a magnificent gesture which the French did not seem to

²⁵⁶ Archives nationales de France, 218/Mi/1.

²⁵⁷ Archives nationales de France, Z/6NL/118, Dossier 2908, *Signal* (Français) 1944 no.7/no.10.

²⁵⁸ Archives nationales de France, Z/6NL/118, Dossier 2908, Procès-Verbal (10 octobre 1944).

appreciate,” he recalled. Madame Beauvillian, a housewife living next door, went even further, telling police that Zucca had celebrated members of Vichy as “great Frenchmen.” She accused Zucca and his wife of laying flowers at the funeral of Philippe Henriot in July 1944 and claimed that Zucca personally congratulated the son of a colleague on joining the Waffen-SS.²⁵⁹

Zucca, whose interrogation took place after that of his neighbors, immediately took credit for his reports in *Signal*. When presented with the testimony of his neighbors, however, Zucca fervently denied accusations of greed and sympathy with the Germans, claiming his neighbors had given exaggerated accounts. While his wife had indeed accompanied him to the funeral of Philippe Henriot, for example, she never laid flowers at the event. Likewise, Zucca admitted to praising Hitler to a neighbor, but attempted to clarify his statement:

It is true that I published the first report of the arrival of the first prisoners repatriated to France. I was struck by the euphoria of the soldiers, and it was thus that I could tell my neighbor that Hitler had made a fine gesture by freeing them. I changed my mind afterward when I realized that this release was only meant to hype up the French.²⁶⁰

He had agreed to work for *Signal* not from greed or political sympathy, Zucca told the police, but because he was secretly working for Allied intelligence. After his time as a photographer with the Deuxième Bureau in the spring of 1940, Zucca claimed he had maintained contacts within French intelligence and that he had occasionally used his press credentials to snap photos of occupied Paris, which were then clandestinely transferred to Allied intelligence in Switzerland. He had accepted the offer to work for *Signal*, Zucca claimed, so that he could continue providing photographs.²⁶¹ The following day, Colonel Antoine Moyen, a staff member at the Ministry of War and personal friend of Zucca’s from his time with the Deuxième Bureau, visited the Bel-Air police

²⁵⁹ Archives nationales de France, Z/6NL/118, Dossier 2908, Procès-Verbal (10 octobre 1944).

²⁶⁰ Archives nationales de France, Z/6NL/118, Dossier 2908, Interrogatoire d'André Zucca (10 octobre 1944).

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

station and testified on Zucca's behalf, stating he had indeed made contact with French intelligence during the occupation. The police cast serious doubt on Zucca's claims, of which, aside from the testimony of Colonel Moyen, no physical proof existed. Because they had little evidence against Zucca aside from neighborhood gossip, however, and because of the pleading of Colonel Moyen, the police decided to release Zucca. Colonel Moyen assured the police Zucca would not attempt to flee justice.²⁶²

In late October, the police turned over Zucca's case to the court system, having determined that, regardless of any aid he had provided to Allied intelligence, his work for *Signal* was still a significant contribution to German propaganda in France. The case was received not by a Court of Justice but by a lesser civic court.²⁶³ Throughout the immediate post-liberation period in France, the French Provisional Government launched an *épuration légale* – a legal purge – in an attempt to rid society of those who had betrayed the French nation. While the Courts of Justice tried the most serious cases of collaboration, handing down over six-thousand death sentences in the process, the civic courts tried lesser cases of “unpatriotic behavior,” the punishment of which could include *indignité nationale* (resulting in a prison sentence) or *dégradation nationale* (resulting in the loss of civil rank or profession).²⁶⁴ Reviewing his case, the civic court decided not to bring Zucca to trial. On November 13, citing evidence and testimony provided by the police, the court declared that Zucca had indeed engaged in collaboration with the Germans for *Signal* magazine. Because of his service in the First World War and the testimony of Colonel Moyen, however, the court ruled that Zucca should not face imprisonment.²⁶⁵ The next day, on November 14, the court

²⁶² Archives nationales de France, Z/6NL/118, Dossier 2908, Procès-Verbal (11 octobre 1944).

²⁶³ Fabrice Virgili et al., “Les Parisiens sous l'Occupation: une Exposition Controversée.” *French Politics, Culture & Society* 27, no.1 (2009), 93.

²⁶⁴ Alan Riding, *And the Show Went On: Cultural Life in Nazi-occupied Paris*, p.318.

²⁶⁵ Archives nationales de France, Z/6NL/118, Dossier 2908, Cour de Justice du Département de la Seine (13 novembre 1944).

informed Zucca that he had received a *dégradation nationale*.²⁶⁶ He would be permanently banned from working in the press.

Zucca's work for *Signal* magazine had undeniably contributed to the German cause in France. Photo-reports on Allied bombing raids and French civilian deaths were among the most potent tools of German propaganda during the occupation. Although most Frenchmen still hoped for an eventual Allied victory over the Germans, reports on Allied bombings succeeded in fostering a sense of wariness, even resentment, toward Americans and Brits among certain pockets of the French population.²⁶⁷ Zucca's collaboration had, in other words, sapped national morale. It was a shameful act in a time of national crisis, to be sure, but not a heinous crime. Other Frenchmen who faced the *épuration légale* had been accused of far worse, of directly or indirectly endangering the lives of fellow Frenchmen. Such were the accusations leveled against Imprimerie Curial-Archereau and its former owner Georges Lang.

On September 28, 1944, Georges Lang returned to Paris from his two-year exile in Switzerland and immediately reclaimed the Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, taking over from Daniel Imhaus as its head administrator. For Lang, the return to Paris and to his business was bittersweet. Only weeks before his return, his son fighting in the Second Armored Division under General Leclerc had been killed in battle. Still mourning the death, Lang was determined to settle scores with his rivals, including the man whom he had blamed for selling out the business to the Germans, Philippe Le Bris. Le Bris was the only director to remain at the factory throughout the entire period

²⁶⁶ Archives nationales de France, Z/6NL/118, Dossier 2908, Lettre de Monsieur Olmi, Juge d'Instruction, à la Cour de Justice (14 novembre 1944).

²⁶⁷ Anglo-American Propaganda Progress in France, 23 September 1942. Military Intelligence Division Regional File, 1922-1944, France, Box 805. Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165. NARA, College Park, MD.

of German requisition from September 1940 to August 1941. On October 3, Lang invited Le Bris into his office where he harangued him on matters of “loyalty.” Rather than defy the Germans, Lang argued, Le Bris had stood by as the Germans requisitioned the factory, forcibly removed Lang and his directors, and began printing propaganda. He gave Le Bris two options: resign from his position immediately or risk being reported to an épuration committee. Le Bris refused to resign.²⁶⁸ The next day, on October 4, Lang gathered the factory’s personnel for a meeting (or rather a speech) where, in no uncertain terms, he denounced Le Bris as a traitor:

There are those of us here who are French and others who are not; among these I will name one: Le Bris. If Monsieur Le Bris claims to have supported me, he supported me only as a rope supports the hanged.²⁶⁹

In what would prove a fateful decision, Lang denounced Philippe Le Bris as a collaborator to the Épuration Committee of the Nineteenth Arrondissement. Heading the investigation of Le Bris was a man named André Thirion.

Thirion was a member of the French Communist Party who, before the liberation, had been a leading member of the resistance in Paris as head of the Clandestine Liberation Committee of the nineteenth arrondissement. Now, as head of the district’s épuration committee, Thirion was determined to root out the collaborators in his midst. After receiving a tip from Lang, Thirion launched an official investigation into the Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, digging through internal documents to collect evidence against Philippe Le Bris. In the process, Thirion came across documents that, in his eyes, implicated the entire board of directors in collaboration, including Georges Lang. Among the most damning documents was the letter written by Lang on July 22, 1940, appealing to Germany as the “victorious” power. Thirion was shocked:

²⁶⁸ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 7 mai 1946.

²⁶⁹ Archives nationales de France, 457AP/164, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau 1946, Affaire Curial-Archereau, note sur la Société Anonyme pour l’Industrie des Arts Graphiques.

There was only one thing to do: ask the police to arrest the concerned persons and put them to justice. This is typically the definition of economic collaboration, and we could not approve it.²⁷⁰

The épuration committee began building a case against Georges Lang and his directors. The first arrest, that of Philippe Le Bris, took place on October 24.²⁷¹ Other arrests came in quick succession: Daniel Imhaus, Robert Rime, Raoul Dauvois, and a handful of lower-level managers. Since Lang was technically absent when the “collaboration” had taken place, he was not arrested but instead asked by Thirion to step down as head of the business. By November 22, 1944, the entire upper-management of the company had either been arrested or forced to resign. Charged by Thirion with printing “the vilest propaganda” against France, the directors were sent to Fresnes, where they were imprisoned until the start of a trial.²⁷² With the management of the Imprimerie Curial-Archereau essentially decapitated, De Gaulle’s Provisional Government appointed the Minister of Industrial Production, the socialist Robert Lacoste, to act as temporary administrator of the company.²⁷³

Following the arrests of the Imprimerie Curial-Archereau’s directors, there then arose the problem of how to pursue a case against them. Unlike most épuration cases, which typically involved individual collaborators, the case of Imprimerie Curial-Archereau was not resolved by a trial at the Court of Justice but by a committee; accusations of economic collaboration within various industries were investigated and tried by special épuration committees. As journalist Alan Riding notes, “These trials could be incestuous affairs since, not infrequently, the judges and the

²⁷⁰ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 14 mai 1946.

²⁷¹ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 7 mai 1946.

²⁷² Archives nationales de France, 457AP/164, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau 1946, Réponse du Comité d’Entreprise et de Gestion de l’Imprimerie Curial-Archereau.

²⁷³ Archives nationales de France, F/41/1335, Note sur l’Imprimerie Curial-Archereau (19 mars 1947).

judged knew each other well and may have worked together before the war.” Often, the committees were predisposed toward lenient sentences, fearing that a harsh punishment could set a precedent and lead to a proliferation of investigations throughout the industry.²⁷⁴ With the management still in prison at Fresnes, the Trade Union Federation of Publishers in France deliberated what to do with the Imprimerie Curial-Archereau case. It was not until October of 1945 that the case was transferred to the Commission nationale interprofessionnelle d'épuration (CNIE). Testimony began in December 1945, but the main hearings would not take place until May 1946.²⁷⁵ During the hearings against the directors of Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, the CNIE considered not one but two separate cases: the first against the directors who ran the factory during the occupation and the second against Georges Lang who had arranged the Aryanization of his business.

The first hearing took place on May 7, 1946, scrutinizing the collaboration of Philippe Le Bris, Robert Rime, and Raoul Dauvois. Rather than passively accepting German demands, the three men had been accused by Thirion of actively developing friendly relationships with the Germans in order to profit financially. For Thirion, building a case against the directors was relatively straightforward. Dozens of workers had come forward to testify against their former bosses; not one volunteered to defend them. The workers' primary accusation against the directors was not of greed, but of harsh treatment. One worker accused the directors of instituting “policies eerily similar to those of the Gestapo.”²⁷⁶ Workers particularly resented the exception made with the German authorities to allow work on Sundays. When hourly production rates fell below a thousand magazines per machine, the directors alerted German guards, who used Luger pistols and snarling German shepherds to threaten workers. One worker recalled an incident in which the

²⁷⁴ Alan Riding, *And the Show Went On: Cultural Life in Nazi-occupied Paris*, p.320.

²⁷⁵ Archives nationales de France, F/41/1335, Note sur l'Imprimerie Curial-Archereau (19 mars 1947).

²⁷⁶ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 7 mai 1946.

Gestapo ransacked his apartment after a director accused him of attempting to sabotage the production of *Signal*. While the workers of Imprimerie Curial-Archereau worked under threat with longer hours and “starvation salaries,” the directors held regular lunches with members of the Propaganda-Staffel at high-end restaurants. “We will never forget the posters of murdered hostages and death threats made against the resistance,” Thirion bitterly testified, “while company management...feasted with German officers.”²⁷⁷ The directors had not only “enjoyed” the occupation, Thirion argued, but also profited. One director had reportedly told a worker, “It is imperative that the Germans win the war. With them, we have everything we need to work.”²⁷⁸

Surprisingly, the directors did not attempt to deny many of the accusations made against them. Their defense rested primarily on the claim that they were trying to save their workers; more important than sabotaging *Signal*, they argued, was preventing the deportation of workers to Germany.²⁷⁹ Indeed, during the occupation, the Germans had attempted to “maximize” industrial efficiency in France in order to free up more labor which could be sent to Germany. As the Germans bought out and consolidated printing presses throughout France, thousands of workers were laid off. The estimated publishing workforce in France fell from around 30,000 in 1939 to 15,800 in 1943. Many of these workers were subsequently conscripted into the *Service du travail obligatoire* (STO) and sent to Germany as forced labor.²⁸⁰ A lawyer representing directors Rime and Dauvois presented the committee with documents from the German authorities demanding that 501 of the factory’s 1,500 workers be conscripted into the STO.²⁸¹ Despite the heavy work load placed on Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, the lawyer noted, the factory could have functioned with only a

²⁷⁷ Archives nationales de France, 457AP/164, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau 1946, Affaire Curial-Archereau, note sur la Société Anonyme pour l’Industrie des Arts Graphiques.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁹ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 7 mai 1946.

²⁸⁰ Claude Bellanger, *Histoire générale de la presse française*, tome 4: De 1940 à 1958, p.32-33.

²⁸¹ Archives nationales de France, F/41/1335.

thousand workers. Nevertheless, the directors “deceived” the Germans into believing the extra work was necessary. Of the 501 workers requested by the Germans, the lawyer claimed, only 82 had been deported to Germany. In other words, 419 workers were saved “thanks to the work of Imhaus, Rime, and Dauvois.”²⁸² Thirion called this claim into question, however, citing the threats of deportation made by the directors as evidence of their disregard for the workers. The directors collaborated with the Germans not to shield their workers from German abuse, but to profit.²⁸³

The question which then arose was whether or not Imprimerie Curial-Archereau printed, primarily, French or German publications. The directors contended that they had not collaborated to profit and that they had, in fact, lost money. While it was true that profits had decreased during the war, the factory still weathered the occupation comparatively better than most other publishers. As French businesses suffered from German exploitation, exorbitant supply prices, and heavy rationing, these problems remained foreign to the Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, which enjoyed increased quotas on paper, electricity, and oil.²⁸⁴ Why did the factory receive increased quotas? Because, Thirion explained, its primary client was the Germans, not the French. The Germans had stipulated that publishers printing primarily French works could receive only forty percent of the paper they used before the war. Various workers testified that the directors gave *Signal* precedence over French publications.²⁸⁵ Even while the paper supply in France plummeted eighty percent between 1940 and 1944, the production rate for *Signal* magazine doubled over the same period, from 420,000 per issue in 1940 to 850,000 per issue in 1944.²⁸⁶

²⁸² Archives nationales de France, F/41/1335.

²⁸³ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 7 mai 1946.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ Claude Bellanger, *Histoire générale de la presse française*, tome 4: De 1940 à 1958, p.30. ; Archives nationales de France, 457AP/164, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau 1946, Affaire Curial-Archereau, note sur la Société Anonyme pour l’Industrie des Arts Graphiques.

Ultimately, the committee found Philippe Le Bris, Robert Rime, and Raoul Dauvois guilty of economic collaboration with the Germans. Rather than handing the case over to a Court of Justice, however, the committee passed down a relatively lenient sentence: the men would be permanently banned from the publishing industry.²⁸⁷

The following week, on May 14, 1946, the committee shifted its attention toward Georges Lang. The case against Lang was more difficult to build largely because the Germans had removed him from the factory in October 1940. Despite Lang's more limited role, Thirion blamed him for engineering the business' Aryanization. Thirion reserved his most venomous rhetoric not for the directors – Le Bris, Rime, and Dauvois – but for the owner Lang:

Morally, I want to say here that he is most responsible. Men like Lang, through their personal selfishness and their desire to remain at the head of their business...did everything possible so that an agreement could exist between the provisional victors and the French population, all to maintain their business.²⁸⁸

Lang's actions, Thirion further insisted, had not stemmed solely from simple selfishness, but from a deeper political affinity for Hitler and the Nazi regime. Multiple workers recalled comments made by Lang in 1936 during the wave of factory strikes that followed the election of the Popular Front government. Denouncing the "Marxist rabble," Lang had told his workers on more than one occasion that men like Hitler and Mussolini would never tolerate the events unfolding in France. "Hitler will come to restore order," he declared.²⁸⁹ Rather than deny the comments outright, Lang instead emphasized that he had made them in 1936 and not in 1940 when Germany invaded France. Regardless of their timing, they were, at the very least, extremely off-color remarks, especially for a convert from Judaism. To counter Thirion, Lang reminded the committee that his factory had

²⁸⁷ Archives nationales de France, F/41/1335.

²⁸⁸ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 14 mai 1946.

²⁸⁹ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 7 mai 1946.

maintained contracts with French communist groups throughout the 1930s, proof that his actions under the occupation could not have been politically motivated.²⁹⁰

Rather than disrupt Thirion's argument, Lang's quick retorts led Thirion to make his larger point: that Lang had acted, above all else, from personal greed. "[Collaboration] was just business" to him, insisted Thirion. Lang's actions had occurred to his own personal benefit while at the expense of France. Over the years, various Frenchmen had referred to Lang derisively as "that Jew Lang," a name he resented deeply.²⁹¹ In Lang's mind, he was a Frenchman first and foremost. He had acted during the occupation not as an acquisitive Jew but as a businessman taking back what was rightfully his. What fault could others possibly find in his motives? How could his patriotism be questioned, especially when one of his sons had fought and died to liberate France? "One of my sons was killed," Lang shouted indignantly at Thirion, "They did not leave me time to mourn my son, an épuration committee accused me of collaboration. They tried to dirty me, to take my house." Thirion commended Lang's son for his service to France but argued that the sacrifice of the son could never redeem the betrayal of the father:

This is not the first family in France, that we know, where the father behaved badly and the son behaved well. In this war, this was perhaps the most painful experience: seeing families torn apart.²⁹²

Ultimately, Thirion argued, Lang had two morally acceptable options after the Germans first threatened to requisition his business: either abandon the factory to the Germans or dismantle the business completely. Instead, in May 1941, Lang had chosen to cooperate with the Germans, agreeing to an Aryanization of the business and four "unacceptable" conditions which included

²⁹⁰ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 14 mai 1946.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² *Ibid.*

printing *Signal* magazine and funding a Gestapo workshop in the factory. These harsh assertions led to a particularly testy exchange between the accuser and the accused at the May 14 hearing:

Lang – Apart from my assumed political views, you reproach me for working to lift the requisition weighing down on my house?

Thirion – Yes.

Lang – The Germans commandeered my house! I opposed the will of the Germans, and they reproached me for resisting! I did everything to drive the Germans the hell out of my house! I did everything to have the requisition lifted!

Thirion – You come here giving us the same defense made by Pétain and Laval! The same arguments, the same background story.²⁹³

By collaborating with the Germans, by printing propaganda works and funding the Gestapo's infamous *affiches des fusillés*, Lang had dirtied his hands with the blood of murdered resistance members.²⁹⁴ This, in Thirion's view, was an unforgivable crime.

The business professionals judging Lang at the May 14 hearing, however, did not follow Thirion's arguments and were, in any case, bound to view Lang's actions in 1940 and 1941 with more sympathy than contempt. Ruling that Lang could not be held responsible for the actions of his directors while *in absentia* from the company, the committee found Lang not guilty on the charge of collaboration.²⁹⁵ On May 27, the committee approved the return of Imprimerie Curial-Archereau to Lang's ownership. The Imprimerie Curial-Archereau trial was more than just a confrontation between a resistor – Thirion – and a quasi-collaborator – Lang. It was a confrontation between a communist worldview hardened by war and a hard-headed businessman whose views evolved as the German occupation tightened. Ultimately, Thirion's comparison of Lang to Pétain was unfair.

²⁹³ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 14 mai 1946.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ Archives nationales de France, F/41/1335, Note sur l'Imprimerie Curial-Archereau (19 mars 1947).

Even from a distance of seven decades, reviewing the cases of André Zucca and Georges Lang is no simpler for a scholar today than it was for French contemporaries in 1944. Undoubtedly, with both men, the instinct for self-preservation was stronger than the instinct to resist. Although he later came to regret his actions, Zucca accepted work for *Signal* in July 1941 and the perks that came with his position, which allowed him to resume his passion of photographing Paris. Georges Lang, the prideful entrepreneur, also accepted questionable conditions set by the Germans while placing his business back in trusted French hands. Surely, the actions of these men could not be compared to those of notorious collaborators like Robert Brasillach or Jacques Doriot. And yet, there remains the lingering question of what one labels self-preservation. Was it a form of collaboration or accommodation?

Philippe Burrin, a prominent historian of the occupation, prefers *not* to use the term collaboration as he believes the term carries too much baggage. The Germans were occupying France, he notes, and for any professional to avoid dealings with the Germans was impossible. Burrin instead prefers the term “accommodation.” He distinguishes between three categories of economic accommodation: structural accommodation (completing German demands while providing essential services to French society), opportunist accommodation (driven by a desire to preserve personal interests), and political accommodation (professionals who shared similar ideological views with the Nazis).²⁹⁶ Using Burrin’s criteria, Zucca and Lang both fall under the category of opportunist accommodation. For some historians, however, the term “accommodation” in the case of Zucca and Lang might seem too lenient. István Deák, a scholar of European political history, defines accommodators as “people who tried to get by under foreign occupation, who hoped to

²⁹⁶ Kenneth Mouré, “Economic Choice in Dark Times: The Vichy Economy,” *French Politics, Culture & Society* 25, no.1 (2007), 116.

survive the war unscathed, and who wished to remain unpolitical.”²⁹⁷ The key word here is “unpolitical.” At the épuration committee hearings of the Imprimerie Curial-Archereau in May 1946, a local businessman described the actions of Lang and his directors as no more culpable than “the corner grocer selling his services to the Germans.”²⁹⁸ Such claims do not stand up to serious scrutiny, however. Through publishing and photographing for *Signal* magazine, Lang and Zucca both contributed a great deal to the Nazi propaganda apparatus in France; the work these men agreed to carry out was, by its very nature, political.

How then should the historian assess the self-preservation of André Zucca and Georges Lang? Reviewing the evidence available, one must conclude that both men fell on the collaborationist end of the spectrum. But the label “collaborator” fails to resolve the murkiness, the moral dilemmas, or the personal agony surrounding the actions both men took when confronted with the German occupation. While similar in its manifestation, self-preservation was a phenomenon distinct from collaboration; it was willing action rooted not in animus or ill will, but in delusion and complacency. Certainly, historians cannot celebrate such acts. But historians should not condemn them outright either. Not long after the end of the war, British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden remarked: “If one hasn’t been through all the horrors of an occupation by a foreign power, you have no right to pronounce upon what a country does which has been through all that.”²⁹⁹

²⁹⁷ István Deák, *Europe on Trial: The Story of Collaboration, Resistance, and Retribution During World War II*, p.4.

²⁹⁸ Archives nationales de France, F/12/9644, Dossier Imprimerie Curial-Archereau, Séance du 7 mai 1946.

²⁹⁹ Alan Riding, *And the Show Went On: Cultural Life in Nazi-occupied Paris*, p.xiii.

Conclusion: Continuities

The last issue of *Signal* magazine rolled off the press at the Deutscher Verlag in Berlin sometime in late March or early April 1945. Of course, by then, no one had been reading the magazine for some time. With the Allied armies quickly approaching Berlin from east and west, those who had the ability to flee fled the city. Editor-in-chief Giseler Wirsing departed on April 1, moving south toward Bavaria. By May, the war was over, and on May 25, the magistrate of the city of Berlin put the Ullstein family back in charge as custodians of the Deutscher Verlag. Ironically, in August, the publishing house was requisitioned once more, this time by the U.S. Military Government in Berlin, and required to print anti-Nazi propaganda.³⁰⁰ Once the largest publication in Europe, *Signal* magazine quickly faded from the European consciousness, but the men who worked for the magazine and the ideas it espoused lived on – some in prominence and others in obscurity.

Max Clauss, who joined *Signal* as an editor in 1940, fled Germany at war's end and made his way to fascist Portugal, where he abandoned his lengthy career in politics and became a shipping merchant in Lisbon. Sometime in the 1950s, Clauss returned to Germany and continued living as a businessman.³⁰¹ He became a representative for the Hannover Messe, a German industrial fair, and, later in the 1960s, worked as a representative of industrial affairs at the European Commission, an institution that lives to the present-day as part of the European Union.³⁰² In the

³⁰⁰ Deutscher Verlag, 1944-1947. Office of Military Government for Germany: Records of the Information Control Division, Box 175. Records of United States Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Record Group 498. NARA, College Park, MD.

³⁰¹ Guido Müller, "France and Germany after the Great War: Businessmen, Intellectuals and Artists in Nongovernmental European Networks," *Culture and International History*, p.105-106.

³⁰² "Dr. Clauss Feted," *Times of India*, January 28, 1965.

late 1960s, he acted as an advisor on foreign affairs to German Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger. Clauss died in 1988.³⁰³

Giselher Wirsing, *Signal*'s final chief editor, was never charged with war crimes (as his friend Walter Schellenberg was) by the Americans who arrested him. He was eventually found guilty, however, of being a "follower" of the Nazi regime by a West German court in 1950 and fined 2,000 marks. Wirsing appealed the fine to the Munich Court of Appeals, who agreed to reduce the fine to 500 marks because Wirsing "had favored an improvement of the situation of forced laborers and Jews" – never mind his long record of anti-Semitism and writings against "Judeo-capitalism."³⁰⁴ Wirsing continued to come under criticism from Jewish groups throughout the postwar period.³⁰⁵ Despite his prominent role in the Nazi propaganda apparatus, however, Wirsing maintained a successful press career in post-war Germany. In 1954, he became the editor-in-chief of *Christ und Welt*, a conservative-evangelical publication that was the most widely-read newspaper in West Germany until the mid-1960s.³⁰⁶ There he remained until 1971, drawing attention from the U.S. State Department and the CIA for his editorials which regularly criticized U.S. policies toward Israel and Vietnam.³⁰⁷ Wirsing died in 1975.

André Zucca, the Paris correspondent for *Signal*, was permanently banned from working in the press by the decision of a civic court in November 1944.³⁰⁸ Along with his wife, Zucca left

³⁰³ Guido Müller, "France and Germany after the Great War: Businessmen, Intellectuals and Artists in Nongovernmental European Networks," *Culture and International History*, p.105-106.

³⁰⁴ *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (21 February 1950), WIRSING, GISELHER_0020.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

³⁰⁵ Sam Miller, "Judge Hits Friendly Treatment of Nazis in Germany," *The Jewish Advocate*, September 6, 1956.

³⁰⁶ Agent Report (10 July 1962), WIRSING, GISELHER_0025.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

³⁰⁷ Department of State Airgram (6 November 1972), WIRSING, GISELHER_0030.pdf, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act Special Collection. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency. www.cia.gov.

³⁰⁸ Archives nationales de France, Z/6NL/118, Dossier 2908, Cour de Justice du Département de la Seine (13 novembre 1944).

Paris and settled in the commune of Dreux, some forty miles west of Paris. There, Zucca changed his name to André Piernic and lived the rest of his life in relative obscurity. He opened a photo studio in 1952, where he did family portraits as well as wedding, baptism, and communion photos.³⁰⁹ With little success, the business went bankrupt in 1965, and Zucca decided to return to his beloved Paris. He lived in Montmartre until his death in 1973.³¹⁰

Georges Lang, the Parisian publisher of *Signal*, was vindicated by an épuration committee in May 1946 and allowed to return to his business. The government, however, had other ideas. That same month, representatives from the CGT (a major trade union confederation) had promised the workers of the Imprimerie Curial-Archereau that the factory would be nationalized. The French Minister of Industrial Production, a communist named Marcel Paul, approved the plan, and a year-long legal battle ensued between Lang and the government over rights to the factory. With the communists effectively forced from power in March 1947, the French State scrapped communist plans to nationalize the factory, handing full reign back to Georges Lang. He died a few weeks later, in April 1947.³¹¹ Lang's surviving son Jacques took over the factory after his death and reverted it back to its original name, Imprimerie Georges Lang. Over the next two decades, Jacques Lang continued to build on the success of his father, signing more major contracts for Imprimerie Georges Lang throughout the 1950s and 1960s, including with Time-Life International.³¹²

A common thread runs through the wartime years of Clauss, Wirsing, Zucca, and Lang – a seeming ambivalence toward the Nazi regime. Whatever their personal reservations, however, all four men agreed to work with the Nazis in some capacity. In each case, personal reservations

³⁰⁹ Archives nationales de France, 218/Mi/1.

³¹⁰ Jean Baronnet, *Les Parisiens sous l'Occupation: Photographies en couleurs d'André Zucca*, p.174.

³¹¹ Archives nationales de France, F/41/1335, Note sur l'Imprimerie Curial-Archereau (19 mars 1947).

³¹² Archives nationales de France, F/41/1335, Lettre du 28 décembre 1960.

on Nazism were overcome by a desire to continue professional and political endeavors uninhibited. In the case of Clauss and Wirsing more specifically, collaboration meant accepting Nazism and all of its crimes. Ironically, those who contributed the most to the crimes of the Nazi regime paid the least for their “collaboration,” enjoying successful careers after the war. Not so for the French. Lang died immediately after his business was restored to him, while Zucca lived the next three decades in poverty and obscurity.

Signal magazine was a singularly unique propaganda experience for its time – a piece of propaganda that was not *national* in its horizon but *European*. Reviewing the magazine’s history offers scholars not only a better understanding of European collaboration, but also a unique window into the history of European integration and of twentieth-century Europe more broadly. Its appeal to a European Community was not merely propaganda fluff, as some might dismiss it, but instead rooted in serious intellectual thought that predated the Nazi rise to power. The Europe envisioned by *Signal*’s authors was not the one of liberalism and political freedom that exists today, but one of anti-liberalism, nationalism, and authoritarianism – a vision that died with the end of the Second World War. Although some scholars may dismiss the importance of such ideas for the future European Union, other scholars like the German historian Dieter Gosewinkel argue that “anti-liberal concepts of twentieth-century Europe [were] not the counterpoint to, but a part of the process of European integration.”³¹³ Indeed, there are continuities between these competing visions of Europe, which both saw Europe as a distinct, peaceful entity defined against the Soviet Union and the United States.

³¹³ Dieter Gosewinkel, Anti-liberal Europe: A Neglected Story of Europeanization, p.17.

The Second World War was a certain kind of collective experience for the peoples of Europe. For the first time since Napoleon, most of continental Europe – from the Atlantic coast to the Russian steppes – had been brought under the heel of a single military power: Nazi Germany. Ironically, it was the humiliating defeat of so many European states at the hands of an upstart, revisionist and imperialist regime that forced Europeans to think in broader, continental terms rather than national ones. As editor Giselher Wirsing wrote in *Signal* in 1943, the questions facing the occupied-peoples were not a matter of saying “we Germans” or “we French,” but “we Europeans.” Ultimately, this vision would not be realized by those who had supported the Nazi regime like Wirsing, but by those who had opposed it.

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